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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



[A CONFIDENCE.]

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER XIV.

Luciana: Self-harming jealousy!—ye, beat it hence.

Adriana: Unfeeling ones can with such wrongs dispense.

I know his eye doth homage elsewhere, Or else what lets it but he would be here?

Since that my beauty cannot please his eye, I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

Comedy of Errors.

SEVENOAKS and Cavendish Manor, as we have before stated, were contiguous, and were two as fine estates as the county contained.

The manor belonged to Lady Drummond for her lifetime, and it was her custom to visit the old place once or twice a year. It was therefore quite opportune that Lord Strathspay and his party were going to Sevenoaks, as Lady Cecilia was anxious to make one of her annual visits. She at once caused Sir Varney, who was a most dutiful and obedient husband, to despatch invitations to their numerous friends to meet them at the manor for the shooting season; and, at her suggestion, the Earl of Strathspay did the same thing.

Accordingly when they reached the end of their journey the earl's party found a gay assemblage of friends awaiting them.

"We are going to have a delightful season," remarked Lady Drummond, "and you may thank me for it, my lord; you and Sir Varney would have moped here all alone and popped your solitary guns if I had not come to your rescue. Men are so absurdly stupid!"

My lady showed her white teeth in a flashing smile as the earl handed her into the carriage that was to convey her to the manor, and she put out her white, jewelled hand to bid him farewell.

"I shall expect to see a great deal of you at the manor," she said; adding, with a peculiar look in her eyes, and a faint suggestion of regret in her voice: "You used to like the manor years ago."

"I like it yet," replied the earl, gallantly, "and shall certainly avail myself of your kind invitation. Of course you'll not wait to be invited to Sevenoaks—you and Sir Varney?"

The pleasant, good-natured, unsuspicious baronet bowed, while his flashing lady replied:

"Not I, my lord earl—I always go whither I please, and it will certainly please me to come to Sevenoaks. But I've fallen into shocking habits of late. You know how I gallop?—well, I shoot too—I shoot pheasants, my lord!"

The earl did raise his eyebrows in well-bred surprise, and the gay baroness broke into a ringing laugh.

"And I follow the hounds," she continued, "and indulge in all manner of masculine pleasures. Sir Varney likes it, but you are shocked, my lord."

Sir Varney smiled indulgently on the bewitching creature who bore his name, and Lord Strathspay protested gallantly that nothing her ladyship pleased to do could shock him.

Meanwhile the countess and her two children, and their two nurses, waited patiently in the Sevenoaks carriage, Colonel Chudleigh and his wife and several other friends having driven on ahead.

"How my Lord Strathspay do admires Lady Drummond," whispered Lola to Judith, with a peculiar expression in her black eyes.

Judith gave her a nudge.

"Why don't you hush," she said, "and attend to Lord Augus?"

But Lola was not to be silenced.

"Only watch him, Judith," she continued, in a loud whisper; "his very eyes dance as he looks at her! She be a lovely woman, my Lady Drummond; what a pity the countess ain't like her!"

"Will you hold your tongue?" returned Judith, gathering Lady Pearl in her arms and moving to the opposite side.

"How savage you are, to be sure," continued Lola. "Taint no harm I'm saying I am sure, and every one knows it. The coachman was speaking about it last night, and he says that the earl and Lady Drummond used to be lovers, and that—"

"Silence, I say!" snapped Judith, her brown eyes fairly blazing, for, glancing over at her mistress, who reclined amid the cushions, she saw that she was as white as death, with a wild and terrified look in her lovely eyes.

She had heard the nurse's idle words—if idle they were—and an awful fear thrilled every fibre of her being.

What if it were so?

She remembered the old report that the earl had once admired Cecilia Cavendish, and that his father's inexorable edict had forbidden him to wed the object of his boyish admiration.

What if the old fancy still lived?

In her terrible preoccupation she had not noticed her husband, or ever dreamed of such a thing. She watched him now with all her tortured soul in her eyes.

He was standing in the afternoon sunlight, his noble head bare, his fine face all aglow with pleasure and admiration as he loo'd up and listened to some gay speech Lady Drummond was making.

Presently the lady extended her slender hand, and the earl kissed it, bowing profoundly.

"Good-bye, Lady Strathspay!" called Lady Cecilia at that moment as the earl turned and left her. "I shall expect you to drive over to the manor every day."

The countess nodded and smiled—oh, such a wan, sad smile—and made room beside her for her husband.

He settled himself down with an air of enjoyment, taking his son from Lola and establishing him on his knee.

"Now, Sanford, drive like the wind," he called. "I'm anxious to see the old place again. Do rouse up a little, Marguerite," addressing his wife, "and look at Sevenoaks tower in the setting sunlight; it is really annoying to have you always moping so."

The countess obeyed. She roused up, and looked at the tower, and smiled and talked with a strange glitter in her eyes and a hectic bloom on her cheeks, and in her heart—deep in her heart—that poisoned,

rankling thora that the nurse's idle words had implanted.

The manor gentry were dining at Sevenoaks a few days after, and together with the earl's guests they made a large and gay party. All day the gentlemen had been popping at the pheasants in the west copse, while the ladies dozed over French novels in the cool drawing-rooms; but the clashing of the old tower bell had called them all together, and now in their best array they occupied the great green drawing-room that opened into the dining-hall.

The long table, with its spotless damask and glittering glass and silver, was already laid, and through the gorgeous stained windows streamed the red August sunlight, making the swinging chandeliers and costly goblets and gilded vases gleam and glitter as if wrought of precious stones.

The Countess of Strathspey occupied a sofa at the extreme end of the drawing-room, with Colonel Chudleigh on one hand and Sir Varney Drummond on the other. She was magnificently robed in a blue silk dinner-dress, elaborately trimmed with rare old point lace, and in her ears and at her throat burned the old Strathspey diamonds. Her wondrous golden hair lay over her fair brow in countless little shining curls, and her cheeks glowed like the heart of a blush rose, while her eyes, her lovely sapphire eyes, fairly dazzled one with the splendour of their feverish brightness.

Never in all her life had Marguerite, Countess of Strathspey, looked more beautiful or felt more supremely unhappy.

At the other end of the long and magnificent apartment, in an embrasure of one of the stained windows, sat Lady Drummond. She wore a dress of some light, gold-hued fabric, that brought out in wondrous perfection all the glorious tints of her Hebe-like face, and her black braids and heavy curls were held in place by thick bands of red Indian gold. Cleopatra herself never looked more regal than did my Lady Cecilia, sitting beneath the gorgeous glow of the richly stained glass.

Lord Strathspey bent over her chair, his face glowing and animated. She was turning the leaves of a landscape folio, talking to the east in the meantime,

"I'm going to shoot to-morrow," she said, with an arch smile, "so you must come to the manor. I'm anxious to disgust you, my lord. I always was a tomboy, you know. Do you remember, Angus?" she began, then with a blush and drooping lids, "my lord, I mean. I beg ten thousand pardons. Thinking of the old days made me forget. But do you remember what rare mornings we used to have, galloping to cover down on Willow Heath? Ah, me!"

Lady Cecilia sighed and seemed not to hear the earl's earnest assurance that he did remember. Presently she continued, speaking as if half to herself:

"Such rare mornings! Dear, dear, what a pity we cannot always be young and happy! This humdrum married life is very prosy; don't you think so, my lord?"

"Well, I don't know," replied the earl, with a laugh. "I have not found mine so very prosy; but I daresay you know best, Lady Drummond."

"Of course I do," said she, biting her scarlet lips with vexation, but laughing gaily; "and à propos of prosiness we are to have a ball over at The Cedars. Lady Vernon drove over yesterday to tell me. The cards go out to-morrow, and it comes off on the twenty-ninth, a real fancy affair, *bal-masqué*, you know. You'll not find any prosiness there, I'll promise you. Now do guess who's to be the lion," she added, innocently, but with a sudden flush in her Spanish eyes.

"I'm sure I've no idea whatever, unless you mean yourself," replied the earl.

"Myself! Oh, you stupid! Meaning myself I should have said queen! Who is to be the lion, I say? Who, indeed, but Colonel Gilbert Vernon, Lady Vernon's brother, just home from India; and, begging your pardon, my lord, your wife's old lover—a charming man. You had better look out for yourself, my lord earl."

Something in the insinuation and in her ringing laugh irritated Lord Strathspey. He frowned and bit his lip.

"I can't see what I have to fear from Colonel Gilbert Vernon," he replied, coldly.

"Can't you?" continued the lady, in a teasing tone. "Lady Strathspey is a charming woman, and smouldering fires are soon rekindled."

The earl almost involuntarily glanced across at his wife. She was a charming woman indeed, and more charming he thought at that moment than he had ever seen her before—she who a day or two before had been so languid and listless. What could be the secret of this sudden change?

"Only look at her now—the countess, I mean," continued his companion, who had followed his glance. "Doesn't she look glorious? Such a change! Down in the Tyrol she was like a ghost. What is the se-

cret, I wonder? I can scarcely believe her the same person."

"She's like all the rest of her sex, whimsical and changeable," replied the earl.

"Not so, my lord," retorted Lady Cecilia, half in earnest, half in jest; "we women always have a motive, especially where our good looks are concerned. Let me read the riddle for you. Colonel Vernon calls this evening. The countess herself told me not an hour ago that she expected him. Can't you see, my lord? I warned you to take care."

Again her wicked, teasing laugh rang out. For the life of him Lord Strathspey could not conceal his vexation. He was just blind and simple enough to suffer this arch enchantress to achieve her object, which was to rouse his jealousy and suspicion in regard to his wife.

Peers are only human after all, despite their noble blood and high-sounding titles, and as weak and as full of foibles, a goodly number of them, as the lowest boor that pays them homage.

Angus, Earl of Strathspey, was no exception. Though a good and generous man, and pretty shrewd, he was not without his failings. Being the thirteenth Earl of Strathspey Castle did not make him perfect by any means.

He glanced across, a second time, at his wife, in her shimmering laces and diamonds, her face bright with feverish expectation, and a sudden thrill stirred his heart.

Was it because this Indian colonel was coming that she had bloomed out so?

He knew the story of Gilbert Vernon's early love for Lady Marguerite of Anklan Oaks; he was only a young Guardsman then, and he was very desperate when he found there was no hope for him, and, talked a good deal about blowing his brains out, but concluded to go with his regiment to India instead.

Here he was back again, a colonel, and a bachelor still.

Lord Strathspey gnawed at his moustache, and watched his beautiful countess with covert glances. Poor, blind Lord Angus, he could not see, he could not dream, and there was no friendly tongue to whisper to him the truth, that his poor, loving, constant wife, stung by cruel jealousy, had thrown off her lethargy, her weakness, her terrible sorrow, and by an effort almost superhuman had bloomed out in all the beauty she possessed, hoping to hold his love, her dearest treasure, which she saw, with a woman's quick perception, was slipping from her.

Her husband did not dream of this, which Lady Cecilia well enough knew, and her wicked eyes gleamed with triumph as she watched the earl's moody face and saw that her random arrow had struck home.

But the clanging of the great dinner-bell brought this little side-play to an abrupt close, and the earl and his guests filed through the glittering rooms and surrounded the magnificent board, all suavity, and smiles, and honeyed words, too well bred and self-possessed to betray even a suggestion of the bitter and torturing passions that filled their hearts.

CHAPTER XV.

A mother is a mother still, The holiest thing alive. Coleridge.

LORD STRATHSPEY all at once had imperative occasion to go to London—only for a short stay, however, and Colonel Chudleigh was to do the honours and his lordship's guests to make themselves comfortable till his return.

He started for the early train before breakfast was served, and the countess and her children were still in their dressing-room. He tapped lightly at the door as he passed it on his way down. Judith admitted him, and his wife arose, still wrapped in her morning cashmere, at his entrance.

"Don't disturb yourself, Marguerite," he said, just a trifle coldly. "I'm off for London, and just dropped in to say good-bye."

He crossed to the lounge, upon which the children were sitting, and kissed them repeatedly. Lady Pearl clung to his neck and fell to sobbing.

"Don't go, papa, darling papa," she implored; "we wants papa here, don't we, mamma?"

Mamma nodded, with the hot tears rising to her eyes.

"But papa must go, just for a little while, and he'll bring Pearl a great doll, with winking eyes. Will that do?"

Lady Pearl clapped her hands in ecstasy.

"And what shall I bring you, my boy?" continued the earl, taking the boy's face in his hands,

and looking down into his eyes with unspeakable love.

Light, cold eyes they were, a trifle opaque and dull, and the face was inclined to be thin and sallow. Lady Pearl looked like a rose-bud beside her brother, and I think her father, though he was almost unconscious of it, felt a little angry and vexed at her fair,

fresh loveliness. What business had she to be brighter and handsomer than his son, his heir?

"What shall I bring you, my son, from London?" reiterated the earl, for the boy had not answered.

"Nothing! I don't want anything," he replied, at last, with a sullen air. "Pearl can have the doll, I won't have anything."

"You may have the dolly some too, bubby," cried generous little Pearl; "I won't keep her all the time."

"No, I shan't!" returned the young lord, spitefully.

His father looked inexpressibly grieved. From day to day this was the trouble in the nursery—the cross, unamiable temper of the boy. Nothing could please or content him; he was always surly and envious, while Lady Pearl was all generosity and sweetness.

"Never mind; I'll bring you both something. Be good children," said the father.

Then he turned to the countess and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Marguerite; my stay will be short, and the colonel will see that you are comfortable."

He did not kiss her, and his voice was cold, his manner distant and ceremonious.

Colonel Gilbert Vernon had called on the evening of the dining party, just as Lady Drummond predicted; and the countess had received him very graciously, and even honoured him with a promenade on the terrace.

Consequently my lord, her most injured husband, was in the sulks, and not at all disposed to be affectionate.

"Good-bye, Angus," said his wife, her voice faltering and her eyes swimming with tears; "won't you kiss me before you go?"

The pitiless voice touched the earl keenly, but he was too proud to show it.

Instead of clasping her in his bosom, as his inclination prompted him, he only touched his lips to her forehead.

As the door closed behind him his wife, unmindful of the presence of her children and their nurse, threw herself upon the couch and burst into a passion of hysterical sobs and tears.

But in a very little while she arose, still and calm.

"Take the children away," she said, motioning to Lola, who had just entered; "and do you remain, Judith."

"Now bring my travelling dress and ring for a cup of chocolate," she continued when they were alone.

Judith stared in amazement.

"I am going back to the Tyrol," explained the countess. "Now is my time while the earl is away, and I've not a moment to lose."

"My lady—you?" ejaculated the girl. "Why not send me in your place?"

"Because I want to go myself. I must go and see that child again, and be sure that I am not mistaken. I must go, Judith, so don't waste time in words."

"But, my lady, I beg your pardon," ventured Judith, "what will your guests think? What will my lord say if he should find it out?"

"My guests may say what they like," replied the countess, her eyes blazing. "I shall leave my apologies with Mrs. Colone Chudleigh, and I'll explain to the earl when he returns. I've made up my mind to go, and you need not try to dissuade me, no matter how good your motive may be."

Judith acquiesced with evident reluctance, believing, as she did, in her calm and far-sighted wisdom, that the step her lady was about to take was rash and ill-advised, and one which might lead to unpleasant consequences, to say the least.

The countess herself did not pause to consider; she only saw an opportunity to accomplish the supreme desire of her heart, and made haste to embrace it.

Since leaving the Tyrol her impatience and suspense had amounted to torture. She could never rest, never draw a contented breath, till she went back and assured herself whether or not the boy bore the Strathspey birth-mark.

If he did not, and all her dreams and impulses were delusions, the sooner she found out her mistake the better. But if he were her child, her own offspring, then a great and perilous task lay before her, for he should be reinstated in his rightful place and proclaimed heir to the earldom of Strathspey.

No passion is stronger and more determined than a mother's love; and this mother's love for that little out-cast nursing of the milk-goat amounted to idolatry. In her dreams, in her waking hours, he was ever present, and a single thought of that little, warm, milky mouth that she kissed in her first vision thrilled her with passionate tenderness. For this child's sake she was brave and willing to dare all danger—even death, if need be.

More than once she had thought over the expediency of revealing the whole thing to her husband, and entreating him to aid her in righting the great wrong. But the remembrance of his unbelief in regard to her dream always chilled and repelled her. He would laugh at her for a weak, visionary creature; and she would only unsettle his perfect faith that the boy who bore his name was in truth his son. She had a tender love for her great, broad-chested husband, and the bare thought of spoiling his happiness, plunging him into doubt and conjecture, was more than she could bear.

It must not be! She concluded, unwisely enough, perhaps, with the best of motives, to keep it all from him—to bear all the sorrow and weary suspense herself, and follow the faint clue through the dark and mysterious labyrinth alone and unaided.

"But you surely intend that I shall go with you, my lady?" ventured Judith as she assisted the countess to dress for her journey.

"I should be glad enough to have you, Judith," she replied, "but I must leave you here. There's no one in this house that I can rely upon save yourself. I dare not trust my children in the hands of that Dundas woman. I mistrust and dislike her more than I did at first, and I marvel that my lord persists in keeping her, and she in remaining. I think she brought me ill-luck the first hour I ever looked upon her strange face—everything has gone wrong with me since then. A strange face it is—dark and diabolical," she continued, in a dreamy voice—"a face one would not be likely to forget. Judith, do you think I am a sane woman, or am I really going mad, as they suppose?"

"My lady!" cried the girl, dropping her brush; "what do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say, Judith. Am I a sane, sensible woman?"

"Why, yes; who says you are not?"

"Never mind. But the truth is I think such strange things that I doubt my own sanity at times. Judith, did you ever fancy that the awful face that glared upon me in the crimson chamber that night when my babe was stolen might have been the face of the Dundas woman?"

"Oh, no, no, my lady!" cried Judith, in consternation, almost beginning to doubt her lady's sanity, sure enough.

"Well, I have, Judith, many a time," replied the countess, quietly; "and the fancy has been growing very strong of late. If I am not insane I am very sane—very wise, Judith; and I've no human soul in the wide world to trust—no one to help me but you. I must leave you here to watch the Dundas woman and take care of my children while I am gone."

"But for you to go alone—you, my poor, dear lady!" wailed the girl.

"I'm not a baby, Judith," smiled the countess; "and I'm more capable than you think for. I'm strong, and no coward in an emergency, despite my weakness and babyish face. So don't fret, my good girl. There, that will do. Ring for Sanford now to drive me to the station; I shall take the eleven-thirty train. Now send in Mrs. Chudleigh, if she will come; and you must make all needful excuses yourself. Let me see—no, I can't tell you when to send the carriage for me."

Judith obeyed; and in less than twenty minutes the countess entered her carriage and was driven rapidly to the station—Mrs. Colonel Chudleigh looking after her from the hall door with undisguised wonder, and the Dundas woman watching her from an upper window with an eager glint in her black eyes.

CHAPTER XVI.

He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee at thy need.

Passionate Pithym.

"THERE is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hem them how we will," says the immortal bard; and a most malignant and mischief-making divinity it would seem to be at times.

However, we must not stop and bewail over the rough angles and splintered fragments, but wait with patience till the whole is complete, then we shall see that every seemingly adverse stroke was needed to perfect and finish the rounded life.

To our human wisdom it appears just the consumption of ill-luck that Colonel Gilbert Vernon should occupy the same train, indeed the same carriage, with the Countess of Strathspey that morning! That the colonel did so unconscious of all intent is true, but the effects of the occurrence were disastrous enough.

The countess was thickly veiled, and although she was the sole lady passenger it was some time before the colonel recognized her.

He established himself comfortably, read the morning paper, and heartily wished this veiled female in shades in his ill-humour at being deprived of his cigar,

Not a thrill of interest or curiosity as to who or what she was stirred his heart. The colonel had passed that stage of life when one takes an interest in railway acquaintances. Long years of soldier life in the Indies had cooled the fever of his young blood. He was now an eminently handsome bachelor of seven-and-thirty years, a trifle cynical, intensely practical, and the betrothed husband of Miss Julie Beresford, heiress to the sum of ten thousand a year in her own right.

The colonel was running over to Paris, where chance or fate had struck down a fellow-officer and bosom friend with typhoid fever. The despatch reached him that very morning, stating that his friend was dying, and had need of him.

Colonel Vernon started by the first train, not dreaming what a terrible construction would be placed upon his most human journey.

On and on they went, the countess still closely veiled and incognito, the colonel perusing his paper and longing for his cigar—or on and on, through all the seemingly endless length of England, for the countess was going down to Dover, and across the Channel to France, and thence into the Tyrol, following the route her husband had taken; the only one she knew how to pursue.

And with every mile she travelled her courage failed her. In the eagerness and excitement of starting the length and fatigue of the journey had not occurred to her. She began to wish she had hearkened to Judith's sage counsels, or at least consented to take her with her. It was terrible to travel alone and unprotected. But she thought of the little flaxen-haired boy amid the Alpine peaks, and her heart grew strong again. For his sake she would endure it all.

At the first station the colonel got out and enjoyed his cigar, and returned to his seat in a much better humour.

There sat his inevitable lady companion.

"Can I be of any service to you, madam?" he inquired, politely, "get you any refreshments, or anything of the kind?"

The lady gave a quick start, shook her head, and, drawing her veil still closer, muttered an inarticulate denial.

The colonel turned on his heel, determined to leave her to herself.

They got off at Dover in the golden haze of a September twilight just in time to catch the steamer for Calais.

The flash of the innumerable gas-lights, and the noise and confusion on the wharf, well nigh bewildered Lady Strathspey; and the full sense of the terrible step she had taken flashed for the first time upon her.

What would her husband say? She grew deadly faint, and tottered where she stood.

A burly porter hurrying by jested her rudely, and she would have fallen but for the colonel's timely support.

"My dear madam, do allow me to assist you," he exclaimed, passing his arm about her.

For an instant the poor woman reeled, but by a great effort she overcame her weakness and stood firmly on her feet.

"I will accept your assistance, Colonel Vernon," she said as she raised her veil and disclosed her face white and faint from fatigue and intense excitement.

The colonel came to a dead halt, and stood staring down at her as if he thought her a ghost.

"Lady Strathspey!" he gasped, at last, "in Heaven's name—"

"I am going across the Channel, Colonel Vernon," she interrupted, with dignity. "Will you have the goodness to assist me on board the steamer?"

The colonel was a thorough gentleman. He bowed deeply, repressing every vestige of curiosity, and, drawing her arm through his, conducted her to comfortable quarters aboard the steamer.

While he paced the deck half an hour later, puffing his cigar and puzzling his brain to discover what was the meaning of Lady Strathspey's unusual mode of travelling, the countess came gliding to his side.

"Colonel Vernon," she said, laying her hand lightly on his arm, "you are wondering, no doubt, what it is that takes me out of England in this run-away fashion."

The colonel bowed and smiled.

"I am a little curious, I confess, Lady Strathspey," he replied.

The countess stood silent for a moment, looking up at the misty stars overhead, her eyes full of deep and solemn thought.

"Colonel Vernon," she continued, at last, "you may be sure that nothing short of a vital interest would take me from my home and husband in this fashion. My mission across the Channel is one of life and death to my own heart, at least. I am strong enough of will, but very weak of body, as we women unfortu-

nately are. I did not intend that you should find me out, but my poor, womanly weakness betrayed me. Perhaps it is as well. I need a friend. Colonel Vernon, I am almost tempted to trust you, to ask you to help me."

She raised her sad, appealing eyes to his face, and, looking down into their starry depths, the Indian officer felt his heart thrill with something of the old passionate admiration that those same sweet eyes had awakened when he was a gay young Guardsman and Lady Marguerite's lover. But the colonel, as we have said, was a thorough gentleman, a man of stern honour; and, looking down upon the woman he had once loved, now helpless and in trouble, he felt that he could be all the truer and more helpful in his friendship because of that very love.

"Lady Strathspey," he answered, quietly, but with something in his voice that at once inspired faith and confidence, "I am at your service, ready to help you in any way I can."

If he had been profuse in his assurances she would have hesitated; his self-repression and simple candour won her confidence. She drew him to a seat in a sheltered corner, and there beneath the silent stars, with the dash of the silver waters in her ears, she began at the beginning and told him all her strange story, wondering at herself as she did so, for an hour before he would have been the last man on earth she would have chosen for her confidant. Yet she told him everything.

The colonel listened with grave interest, and profound pity softened his keen gray eyes.

Old soldier that he was he could understand the deep yearning of the mother's love for her own babe.

"I am afraid, Lady Strathspey," he said when she had finished, "that you have been hasty in taking this step. It would have been better to have confided everything to your husband, and suffered him to bear his share of the doubt and anxiety. I am an old bachelor," he continued, smiling down upon her with pitying kindness, "but I don't believe in any concealments between man and wife. Your motive is pure and good, but your conduct is open to misconception. However," he added, buttoning up his coat and straightening his fine figure, after his military habit, "if you are determined to go on I am at your service, ready to help you in any possible way."

"I shall go on," replied the countess, firmly; "I will not turn back."

"Very well; go to your room now and try to rest. From Calais I will telegraph to my afflicted friend in Paris, and I'll see you safe into the Tyrol, and on your way home. Good-night, Lady Strathspey."

"Good-night, Colonel Vernon, and may Heaven reward you!"

He strode away, and the countess went to her apartment with a lightened heart.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

DISCOVERY OF A STALACTITE CAVERNS.—It is stated that a splendid stalactite cave has been discovered at the distance of seven verstes from Soukhoum. It is, according to the report, a long series of caves and galleries, the whole extending over a length of about 200 feet; the principal chambers are very lofty, and the stalactites remarkably beautiful. Some fossil bones have been found in the caves, and search is now being made for prehistoric arms and other remains.

SCARLET DYEING ON WOOL AND SILK.—Jegel proposes the following method of dyeing wool and silk scarlet by the simultaneous action of magenta and dinitrophenol or naphthaline yellow. The less magenta is employed the better. The method is to heat a dilute aqueous solution of naphthaline yellow to near boiling, add so much magenta as ammonia to two per cent. of the naphthaline yellow, and then dye. The dye liquor must not be mixed when cold. If this is done all the magenta is thrown down in an amorphous flocculent state. If this has taken place the subsequent application of a boiling temperature does not remedy the mischief, since a part only of the magenta thus precipitated is redissolved; the rest melting together into a greenish golden mass. In this state the liquor is quite unfit for dyeing, and even if filtered gives no good shades.

NEW FISHING SMACK.—A marine novelty worthy of attention was lately exhibited in Glasgow. It was a model of a well-decked fishing craft, 4 ft. long, with 19 in. beam; clinker built and neatly finished. The exhibitor was Mr. Dempster, of Kinghorn, who is well known for his advocacy of deep-sea fishing, and who proposes to convert ordinary open-decked fishing-smacks into well decked boats, by laying a well-caulked deck or flooring from stem to stern at a

height of $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. from the keelson, the space beneath this deck forming the well, which is filled with sea water from several small circular holes in the bottom of the boat. At a height of 5 ft. or 6 ft. above the well deck there is another deck, which rises to within a foot of the gunwale, and which, being water tight and comfortable, is adapted for the quarters of the crew. Mr. Dempster has proved the advantages of this style of fishing craft by actual results in practice; and he claims for his system the advantage that, no matter what seas the boat may ship, it is impossible for it to be swamped, as the water immediately makes its way out at the bottom.

TESTING BURNING FLUIDS.—Mr. Pethuel Millspaugh has recently obtained letters patent for an improved test for burning fluids. This invention provides an improved instrument for testing kerosene oil and other illuminating fluids, and also for determining the specific gravity of fluids generally. The apparatus consists of an upright glass cylinder which is supported in the top of a chamber formed in the upper part of the base. A lamp is placed in the base, the heat from which is transmitted through the chamber to the lower part of the glass cylinder, and the chamber may be made to contain air, water, etc., as required to regulate its intensity. The glass cylinder contains a thermometer, which is fixed therein, and is closed at the top with a brass cover. The burning fluid to be tested is made to completely fill the glass cylinder, so that the thermometer is entirely submerged, and cannot be affected by the surrounding atmosphere. An orifice in the brass cover is opened to allow the escape of vapour from the fluid under test, and when necessary, the lamp is lighted. A flame is held over the orifice, and at the moment the evolved vapour is ignited the temperature of the fluid is correctly indicated by the thermometer. In ascertaining specific gravities by this instrument a hydrometer is also placed within the glass cylinder in such a manner that its scale tube is free to move up or down through a hole in the brass cover. The surface of the fluid tested is plainly visible through the glass cylinder, and the scale may be accurately read.

SUBSTITUTE FOR LITHOGRAPHIC STONE.—A substitute for lithographic stone has been introduced. For the purpose in question the inventor takes a block or slab of slate, or other material, which is to be made perfectly smooth and true, and then coated with glue or other gelatinous matter. In some instances he adds a solution of silicate of soda and bichromate of potash, or uses this solution alone. The coated block is exposed to sunlight, and then washed to remove the superfluous coating; and after being dried it is ready for drawing or writing upon. The ink or pigment is prepared with albumen or other gelatinous matter dissolved in a saturated solution of bichromate of potash, either with or without chrome alum, and with a small quantity of ivory black, to render the ink visible. The picture is drawn upon the prepared block with this ink, and exposed to sunlight, and afterwards the surface is covered with gum or glycerine. The block is then ready for the printer. Another method consists in using, as substitutes, metallic substances, as tin, brass or zinc, preparing them first by rubbing with a solution formed of one ounce of hydrochloric acid, one fourth of an ounce of zinc, and one drachm of glacial acetic acid. After the plate has received the impression from the stone or wood in an ordinary lithographic press, or by means of a "transfer," the ink thereon is dried by heating the plate, which is afterwards plunged while still hot into cold water; this latter operation being supposed to confer permanency upon the impression. The ordinary ink is used in this process, which appears to consist, in reality, of "soldering" the design on the plate and burning it in.

NOVEL MODE OF SAWING WOOD WITHOUT A SAW.

This dominion so long held unquestioned by axe and saw has been at length invaded. Electricity has been pressed into the service and threatens to drive these implements into banishment, while the muscular and other forces which were so largely expended in their use are replaced by the action of the galvanic battery in one of its most simple forms.

The invention we are about to describe is that recently patented by Dr. George Robinson.

This gentleman was well aware that a galvanic current in sufficient quantity when passed over fine platinum wire would raise the temperature of the wire to a red or even white heat. The most important application of the principle had previously been in the employment of the heated wire in certain surgical operations as a substitute for the knife or red-hot iron. It was found that the red-hot wire easily cut or rather burnt its way through the living flesh, and tumours of considerable size were thus removed from the human body. The inventor's attention being fixed on the fact that sodden, wet flesh was cut through in

this way, a little reflection satisfied him that the division of wood, a comparatively dry substance even when green, could be more readily effected by the electrically heated wire. This proved to be the case, and on gently pressing pieces of wood against the red-hot platinum wire, especially when aided by a slight sawing movement, the wood was divided in any required direction as by a handsaw, and, of course, without any effort of skill or appreciable expenditure of muscular power. By arranging the wire with handles or other means, so as to guide it readily, the lumber, whether in trees, logs, or planks may be cut easily as desired. There is here, therefore, a simple and easily applied force, which, in a child's hands, may be employed to fell trees, divide them into logs, and, in short, perform all the operations of the saw and the axe. The surface of the wood where thus divided is, of course, slightly charred, but the black layer is very thin, and for many purposes not disadvantageous, as it is known to preserve timber. The battery employed need only be of the simplest character, as quantity, and not intensity, of current is required.

THE CHILDREN'S LOVE.

GRANDMOTHER sits in the flower-bound porch

As the twilight draweth nigh;
There's a beautiful smile on her beautiful face

As she looks at the golden sky.
The sun drops low in the luminous West,
And the birds are folding themselves to rest.

Her hair is white as the whitest down,

And wrinkles are on her brow;

Her eyes are dim and her form is bent,

And her trembling voice is low;

But love still lives in her kindly heart,

And broader grows as the years depart.

Little ones gather around her chair,

And look up into her eyes,

And list to the words which grandmother speaks

As she looks at the golden skies;

And kisses of love on her age-worn cheek

The children's affectionate joy bespeak.

Grandmother tells of the long ago,
Of the time when she was young,
Of the old gate down by the woodland glade,

Where many a time she swung,
While the birds sang sweetly in the trees,
And the breath of flowers was on the breeze.

Many a chapter of life she reads

As the little ones fondly list,

And her loving eyes are sometimes seen

Through a bright and tearful mist,

As she speaks of the loved who have gone before

And await her there on the heavenly shore.

Grandmother's days are almost past,

But her heart is filled with cheer

As the ringing laughter of the little ones

Merrily falls on her ear;

And she raises her eyes to Heaven above,

And praises Him for the children's love.

C. D.

THE COST OF LIVING.

The coal famine which has so frightened the public is to a great extent the result of an accident—the sudden increase in the demand for coal for the iron trade which has cleared off the stocks at the pit, and for a moment caused the demand to exceed the supply, thus enabling, and indeed compelling the masters to charge new purchasers enormous rates. This cannot, however, last long. There is no exhaustion of coal, no diminution in the quantity procurable, no change beyond a rise of wages in the cost of production; and as profits are very large—we hear of collieries dividing 40 per cent.—and wages are very high, supplies must soon be procurable sufficient to bring down the price. New collieries will be opened and new labourers take to the trade. Rent has not seriously risen of late years, except in one or two districts, the great cities being overbuilt, and the price of houses in the little towns kept down by the emigration from them to the great cities and the country-sides. Bread, though a little higher than it was ten years ago, is very much cheaper than it was in the time of the last generation, when 80s. a quarter was a common price for wheat. Clothing, though dearer than before the American war, is very much cheaper than it was forty years since. Furniture costs less by 30 per cent. than it did fifteen years ago, though we use very much more; and lighting has been reduced more than 100 per cent. Every luxury of food except meat, and milk, with its products, such as butter and cheese, including tea, coffee, and sugar, has been reduced by legislation

more than 100 per cent., while it is probable that with the great hay harvest and root harvest of this year meat and milk will remain stationary for some time to come.

The fall in the value of gold, though it continues and may increase in pace, has not as yet exceeded one-half per cent. per annum, and is diminished by the enormous expansion which the influx itself, as well as the new habits of mankind—the habit for instance, of working in huge partnerships—has given to every description of trade, manufacture, or business. The fall looks more severe when old figures are contrasted with those of a year like this, but if we compare seven years with seven years, and confine the comparison to raw materials, we shall find that it does not exceed the proportion we have stated. As long as the rise is not too swift, everything will adjust itself, the man who is doing any thing getting more for his work, even though he spends more to obtain what he wants. A large section even of those who possess fixed incomes will suffer little from the rise, the price of Consols, for example, being inflated by the abundance of gold, just as the price of cotton is. All receivers of wages will distinctly benefit by the rise in price, and so by-and-bye must that discontented class the agriculturist, for although the price of their corn is fixed by the Russian harvest, and not by the English demand, the effect of a fall in gold extends to the whole world, and the price of their produce, corn excepted, must rise with that of labour and of all other commodities.

It is only during the time of readjustment that serious inconvenience will be felt, and that can be encountered in most instances by a little more economy and painstaking. This is an era of waste. People tell each other complainingly of the small incomes on which their fathers lived, and entirely forget to describe how little their fathers wanted, how they valued their moveable property, how seldom they renewed anything, how long they made carpets last, how jealous they were of anything approaching to household waste. One half the things which the middle class, even the poorer middle class, think necessary are not necessities at all, but luxuries conduced very little to the amenity of their lives.

Even now, when, as *Punch* said, "the one thing dearer than life is living," it is astonishing with how little money the few families who keep up the old tradition contrive to get along. The clergy, for instance, who of all classes will feel the change most severely—their incomes being dependent on the price of corn, which of all prices will rise most slowly—have for thirty years set an example of good domestic management which the whole middle class would have done well to follow, and will follow if prices press on them so hard. Life in those quiet vicarages, supported on, say, 80*s.* a quarter, is neither uncivilized, nor gloomy, nor disastrous—is very often much more pleasant than life in houses maintained on three times the money.

If a rise of prices were to force us all back towards the old frugality and reluctance to spend it would do us all good; but the rise will, in fact, be too gradual, and counteracted by too many influences, such as the increase of business and profit and the communication with new countries, to affect in any perceptible way the national habits.

The rise we should chiefly dread is the one which has occurred so extensively on the Continent—a rise in house-rent, which in many capitals has tripled; but there is as yet little sign of this in England, except in districts like Belgravia and the fashionable quarters of very great cities, where no rise in price matters much to men flushed with new prosperity. To the majority of persons the tendency of rent to rise, which is undoubtedly—bricks, wood, and builders' labour all increasing in price—is counteracted by their willingness, a willingness entirely confined to England, to go away from the towns, to give up general society in consideration of other comforts. If a man's rent rises in London he goes ten miles afield, and corrects his outgoing that way, and he can continue the process up to the point at which the time and health lost in travelling involve too heavy a tax on his means. There is an immense belt of country round London, for instance, quite within the "practicable distance," and still unfilled, and till it is filled the power of building on comparatively cheap sites keeps the rental of houses upon the dear sites within endurable limits. Failing a rise in rent of the Continental kind, there is nothing that we see in the prospect before us to alarm the majority of people, or affect them with more than a temporary annoyance, caused by the difficulty of adjusting prices, salaries, and fees, which are fixed in part by use and wont, and in part by the reluctance to make a charge in fractional parts of a coin. The clergy and those who live on annuities will suffer most, but even on them the screw will be very gradually pressed down, and they will have some compensations in the improved chances which will open before their children and their friends.



[THE PLOT OVERHEARD.]

All seemed fair and safe before her.
Ruth, that tyrannical bugbear, was fairly removed from her path.

The last news from Edgar Ponsford had been so reassuring that she had remitted to him a hand-some gratuity as her bridal gift. And if she loved not her future husband, if terrifying visions of victim to her false beauty did haunt her waking and sleeping dreams, she inwardly vowed that the day which completed her fate and bound her to Otho Fitzurz should be the signal for their banishment.

Henceforth she began a new life, with fresh liberty, fresh hopes, fresh dignity and power, as the very leader of that gay world in which she had hitherto shone as its most brilliant *débutante*.

The door opened, but only to admit the delicate matron figure of the Lady Claud De Vesci.

"Have they come, mamma? It is very tiresome to be kept waiting," said the girl, impatiently, as if by no means desiring a private interview with her gentle mother.

"No, Estelle, not yet. I believe it is scarcely the appointed hour," returned the lady, half reproachfully; "and I wish to have a few last minutes with you before my rights are completely deputed to another. Surely you cannot grudge me that indulgence, my child?"

"Oh, no, of course not, mamma; only I hate all sentimental forms and nonsense," returned the girl.

"I don't see the difference between what I am now and what I shall be twenty-four hours hence. I am sure I shall always be happy to have you with me *apt* to do anything in reason that you have a right to expect, as I have always done. It's of no use making a fuss just because I am going to take another name."

"And another home, Estelle. My child, it was of that I came to speak. It is another home, where your husband is its rightful master; ay, and a daughter is no longer the same to a parent when a higher authority, a yet more sacred claim, demands her obedience. Estelle, hear me for the last and I might almost say the first time that I have ventured to speak to you as a mother should warn her child. I sometimes fear that I have been weak and cowardly in shrinking from my duty, but you are of a stronger and more imperious nature than I am, and I dared not battle with it as I ought. Now I demand a hearing on this eve of your new life."

Lady Mont Sorell gave an impatient gesture.

"Well, mamma, I hope you will not make up for past omissions by a long sermon now. What is it I have to fear?"

"Yourself, Estelle, yourself," returned Lady Claud. "Child, you have come into large and dangerous possessions, and wear dignities with a less

gentle grace and steady brain than the sweet, noble girl who was brought up to them as her heritage."

"And ended by being committed as a felon, it seems," sneered Estelle.

Lady Claud started to her feet, and her gentle face for once had an expression of passionate resentment that almost daunted Estelle by its rarity.

"Girl, never dare to utter such unwomanly falsehood again," she said, sternly. "It will be visited on your own head by a sure retribution. It was partly of Pauline I was about to speak. You are now going to relinquish your own power in a great measure; you are going to pledge yourself to obey a husband's will. This is your last chance of doing justice to that injured girl, and I blame myself for not having insisted on it before."

"Pray in what way? by relinquishing my own rights in her favour? I am afraid the De Vesci would scarcely admire the mixture of Lovett blood with their own," she said, scornfully, though her lips quivered painfully in the effort to assume that bitter tone.

"No, Estelle, but you can give up to her some of your superfluous wealth. You can settle on her whom you so long believed your cousin a sum that will restore her to the station she has lost."

"I suppose she must get out of prison first, mamma," answered the countess, in passionate, choking accents. "Then she will be a fitting bride, you think, for Quentin Oliphant, as he has forfeited any other chance by his mad crime."

"No, Estelle; Pauline would be a fitting bride for the noblest in the land, and the craven lover who could desert her in her need would not win her, even if she could escape all and enjoy rank and fortune as his wife. But I see it is in vain, and I know other means of atoning for my child's cold, hard heartlessness and pride to the angel girl whom I shall ever love so tenderly. And may Heaven avert from you the evil which too surely awaits you, Estelle, unless you humble your heart and strive to fulfil your new duties better than you have done your old ones. And I ask its pardon where I have been wanting in my mother's training of your haughty will."

She bent over the half-daunted countess, but as she kissed her brow and cheeks with tearful sadness the sullen lips did not return the caress, and with a deep, long sigh the gentle mother departed from the presence of her haughty heiress child.

"At least I am free now," she murmured as she slowly took her way to her own apartments. "Hitherto my duty to Estelle has restrained me from obeying the dictates of my heart, but now, my Pauline, my sweet, gentle girl, I will strive to soften your hard lot."

THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Still radiant gems are shining,
Her jet black locks entwining;
And her robes around her flowing.
With many tints are glowing—
Spindles brighter
Now invite her.

The prescribed six weeks had passed away all too swiftly for the bride elect, the envied Countess Estelle.

A world of mingled occupation and amusement, a succession of busy preparations for her bridal, and the incessant gaieties of a London season, almost precluded the possibility of thought and reflection.

Yet there were hours in the still night's wakeful, fevered tossings on the downy couch that might well have brought to the titled heiress a feeling of jealous envy towards the unhappy prisoner Pauline on her pallet bed in which no remorse for the past, no terrors of the possible future planted thorns.

For Pauline at least Fate seemed to have done her worst; and, whatever might befall her, no conscious guilt or fears of discovered crime and treachery could add to the alarm and sorrow of her much-tried soul.

But it was drawing to a close.

Every preparation was made to do honour to the wedding of a duke's heir and a countess in her own right.

Settlements, sanctioned by the Duke of St. Maur, of liberality befitting the wealth and rank of the bride elect, were to be brought on that last day before the wedding, to be duly signed and witnessed.

Jewels had been reset in the most costly and elaborate modern style for the future duchess. Invitations were issued to as many of the "five hundred dear friends" as could possibly be admitted to the spacious saloons of the bride's mansion. And eight bridesmaids from the very cream of the aristocracy were to grace the ceremony with their loveliness and youth like satellites to the sun which was that day to shine supreme in the world of fashion.

Estelle was waiting, in her elegant morning room, for the entrance of the lawyer and her betrothed husband, with the necessary witnesses and documents for signature, ere she prepared to preside over the dinner which on this occasion was to be shared only by her mother and Lady Alice Vernon, who stood in the place of mother to the bridegroom.

Meanwhile the young countess had closed her eyes and clasped her hands in agonized if passing suffering.

"Mercy, mercy!" she murmured. "What did that mean? Did that weak woman actually threaten me with the punishment? She—the meek, tame-spirited one? Surely, surely it is an evil omen. And yet it is safe—safe, I have taken such precautions, it is impossible; and the dead can tell no tales."

A loud ringing of the bell and quick sounds of feet made the girl start and shiver, as if it had been a death knell.

Her nerves must have been strangely shattered for the proud Estelle to condescend to such weakness. But it was only the expected lawyer and the other parties to the approaching ceremonial that caused the terror.

Otho Fitaurse, with the legal functionary and the trustees and witnesses, were announced, and in a brief space of time the deeds were read over and the signatures affixed which were to complete the preliminaries to the irrevocable ceremony of the morrow.

"A little while and that fair hand will sign a yet more important surrender of herself and her rights to my unworthy self," whispered Otho in the girl's ear.

She started painfully.

It was the very sentiment expressed by Lady Claud a few minutes before, and came again like an evil presentiment of the future to her excited brain. Was it really to be such a degradation from her high estate?

Was she, the heiress of a long line and possessor of a coronet, to submit to a mere collateral heir of the Duke of St. Maure the control of her will—her property—herself?

Almost she could have receded and drawn back. Almost she could have torn in shreds that contract which her delicate hand had just signed.

But the glistening vista of unrivaled rank and pomp and homage still opened before her—and fearful memories pushed her on as her sole chance of safety from anger and disgrace to the union which she secretly loathed.

So she returned Otho's smiling jest with a most becoming blush and glance of deprecating modesty, and with a plea of fatigue she dismissed him along with the other members of the group from the room.

"Fatigue!" yes—of brain, heart, and nerves, that well nigh threatened to prostrate even her iron spirit.

When her maid came to prepare her for the "nursery dinner" with the duenne matrons the envied bride was white and chill with the conflict she had undergone, and a message of excuse was despatched to the Lady Alice Vernon for her non-appearance at the dinner-table, of which Lady Claud alone did the honours.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

So many miseries have crazed my voice.
That my woe-worn tongue is still and mute.

A DENSELY crowded church in the most fashionable precincts of the metropolis awaited the advent of the heiress bride, the richest prize and the lowest débütante of the season.

The unbidden carriages might have been counted by dozens, albeit the invited guests made up a goodly party in the gay world.

The glittering toilets even of these voluntary additions to the gay group gave a brilliant and picturesque appearance to the old and not very attractive church, which it graced by so many of the very *crème de la crème* of the noblest aristocracy in Europe.

And a nobler, fairer bride seldom stood within its precincts than Estelle De Vesci, Countess of Mont Sorell.

Carriage after carriage drove off, after depositing its gay burden.

The group round the altar increased continually in density and glittering brilliancy, when a kind of impromptu confused cheer at the door announced the arrival of the countess bride.

A few more minutes and the veiled beauty was conducted up the aisle, followed by a train of youthful bridesmaids.

Beautiful exceedingly she looked, that splendid brunette in her magnificent bridal array.

Her perfect figure was draped in a robe of priceless beauty, while the transparent veil over her dress was fastened to the jetty coils by diamonds that might have befit a princess on her wedding-day.

But the perfection of her exquisite features, the stately grace of her movements, and the flashing brilliancy of her eyes more than outvied the costly splendour of her toilet.

Those who knew her exalted position—the coronet she wore, the rich rent roll she commanded, and the ancient race from which she had sprung—whispered to each other that she rather gave than received distinction from these adjuncts of fortune.

The bridegroom, with his best man, was already standing at the altar awaiting his fair bride. Even the most critical who were freely giving expression to their opinions upon his appearance could not find much to blame in his figure and deportment.

An aristocrat in every bone and limb and gesture, with just that touch of haughtiness that is rather a passport with the multitude, and as much personal attraction as is requisite for a bridegroom who ever plays but a second part in such ceremonials, Otho Fitaurse had a calm *insouciance* of mien that defied and silenced criticism and satire.

Cool and unmoved, as if perfectly conscious of his own pretensions, he received the approach of his bride and the instant appearance of the officiating bishop with a happy imperturbability as if it were an every-day matter to wed a lovely countess regnant with countless thousands tacked to her bridal train. The orthodox hymn was chanted by sweet voices that came like honey on the sacred *edifice* as the processional passed up the aisle and took its place at the altar rail.

Then, after a brief pause, the bishop opened the massive prayer-book and the ceremony began.

Clear and distinct the charge came on the ears of all, and sounded in the hearts of the bridal pair.

Otho heard it calm and unmoved, as if it were but the repetition of some black-letter parchment and formulary that was but a preliminary to the end.

But on Estelle the effect seemed widely different—a more than commonly maiden bashfulness seemed to shake her frame, and her long eyelashes swept her cheeks till no one could have decided whether the orbs thus concealed had tears or smiles in their bright beauty.

But at length the monotonous monologue ceased. The bishop, turning especially to the bridal pair, gave the solemn warning that comes with an irresistible chill even on the most irreverent who are the objects of its questioning.

The sentence ceased, the bride and bridegroom made no sign, there was dead silence among the crowd, and in another moment the prelate was proceeding with the service when a quick, heavy step was heard approaching—a rustic as of silk, and satins and velvets made way from some daring intruder's progress, and a voice sounded strong and firm in the church.

"I do, I object!" said some masculine tones in distinct, sharp accents. "I forbid the marriage!"

Estelle gave one slight shriek, low but piercing. She needed not to look at the speaker. That voice was far too dangerously familiar—had been once too fatally dear to her peace. But still in a kind of desperation she did give one sudden glance round. Her eyes met the fierce, glittering gaze of Walter Fitaurse!

Yes, of him she believed numbered with the dead, bearing still the marks in his handsome features of the fearful suffering and ordeal he had undergone.

Was it a ghost risen with those scars, that pallid face, those coal-like eyes, to upbraid her?

No, there was little hope of that. The voice, the movements were but too clearly those of a human, living, and powerful being.

"On what grounds?" asked the bishop, silencing by an imperative wave of his hand the fierce questioning of the astonished bridegroom.

"Very simple ones, my lord, unless the law of the land is very much changed," returned Walter, coolly. "This lady is already my wife, therefore that fact will present an insuperable difficulty to her occupying a similar station with this very eligible gentleman."

Estelle had not fainted. The old haughty vehemence of spirit supported her even now in her extremity, and she turned round like a deer at bay.

"It is false—false! You cannot prove it. It is a base calumny and revenge!" she cried, in a choking voice. "Take him away! Will no one turn him out? Captain Fitaurse, are you a man to permit this insult?"

"Calm yourself, Lady Mont Sorell," said the bishop. "Of course the matter will be thoroughly looked into before it even receives temporary attention. Who are you, sir? and what proof have you of your strange assertion?"

"My name is Walter Fitaurse, my lord," said the intruder, calmly; "as to my proofs, I believe I have ample evidence according to the laws of the country in which the marriage took place. In the first place here is a volume given to me years since by this fair lady, which I value so much that it has well nigh been buried with me; in this you will observe I am addressed in suitable conjugal phrase."

He handed a small book into the bishop's hands as he spoke, in the fly leaf of which was written:

"To Walter Fitaurse.

"From his loving and devoted wife,

"ESTELLE DE VESCI."

"I think the Countess of Mont Sorell can hardly deny the handwriting of Estelle De Vesci," pursued Walter, with the cool hardihood that was more alarming than the most vehement outburst. "But,

if she should do so, here is a slip of paper signed and witnessed by a person still living."

He drew a paper from his pocket, which he displayed before the eyes of the bishop as well as those of Otho Fitaurse.

It was few lines according to the old laws of the Scotch marriage, purporting thus:

"I, Estelle De Vesci, am content and willing to take thee, Walter Fitaurse, as my husband, so long as life doth last," signed "Estelle De Vesci" and witnessed, in a female handwriting that bore the stamp of youth and perhaps humble education on its characters, "Isabella Crofton."

The grave dignitary gazed on these terribly convincing proofs of dishonour and treachery.

"We will hope this affair can be explained or disproved," he said, sternly. "But till then I have no alternative but to decline any farther procedure with the ceremony. Captain Fitaurse, I presume I need not suggest your obvious duty," he added. "It is for you to avert needless pain from a lady whom I still trust is innocent of wrong."

Otho did not reply.

There was a stormy darkness on his handsome features; but, in deference to the high-born group by whom he was surrounded, he turned to the young countess, whom he had so nearly saluted as his bride.

"Shall I conduct you, Lady Mont Sorell?" he said, with cynical bitterness.

Estelle had neither spoken nor moved since the first appearance of Walter on the scene. And now she gazed at Otho with a kind of cataleptic bewilderment as he addressed her. He repeated the offer with an impatient tone, and a half-cynical smile that half maddened the unfortunate, guilty girl.

She hastily repulsed his proffered hand, and tried to move without any support. But the effort was unsuccessful. She tottered like a tall, rocking tree as if sternly clinging to its position. Then every power failed, the brain reeled, she gave one strong, despairing, terrible cry and fell into the arms of Walter Fitaurse, who had hastily advanced towards her.

He bore her from the spot as if she had been a child, albeit his own frame seemed to be somewhat enfeebled and wasted by illness and suffering, and carried her to the vestry of the church, followed by the white and trembling mother and the ladies of the party.

Every remedy was employed that was at hand to restore the sufferer, but she preserved the same rigid insensibility of aspect, which defied all ordinary attempts to restore consciousness.

The more self-possessed of the party suggested that a physician should at once be sent for, lest any removal in her present state might be fatal, and in a few minutes one of those invaluable gentlemen who always are "on the spot," in such cases, was at the sufferer's side.

"It is a shock on the nerves. There is no immediate danger. But all depends on extreme quiet," he said, after examining the patient. "I would advise that Lady Mont Sorell be at once taken home, and her usual medical attendant summoned, whom I will gladly meet at her house."

The advice was at once followed.

Carefully and slowly Estelle was placed in the carriage which was to have taken her home as a bride, and at her side sat the elderly physician in place of her young bridegroom, albeit she was perfectly unconscious of the change.

Lady Claud, scarcely less to be pitied, and scarcely more animate than her child, followed with the horrified yet sympathizing Lady Alice as her supporter in the next carriage.

There had been a reverent and awe-stricken silence among the masculine members of that astonished group while Estelle had remained there as it were between life and death, but as the carriage drove slowly away Otho Fitaurse turned fiercely to the cause of all this frightful sensation.

"It is of course a matter of taste whether a man prefers a sensation scandal, Mr. Walter or whatever your name may be, but, undoubtedly, I should scarcely have brained my little adventure so publicly, and you will allow me to say, I have a right to demand satisfaction for the grave insult to myself."

"Very sorry to have incurred the disapproval of a gentleman who stands high in the world of taste, besides being an incipient duke," observed the culprit, coolly. "But it was really not my fault. I should have been quite content to have claimed my wife coolly and quietly as my own if she had permitted the transaction, but she took an effectual way of preventing it, you see, captain, which banished all my—"

"I do not comprehend you, sir," returned Otho, bitterly. "Peraps you will consider that it is due to me, as utterly taken by surprise in the matter, and a decidedly injured individual, to explain your unnecessary enigma."

"You shall know it in due time, captain," said Fitaurse, calmly. "But not yet. The affair is

too completely in embryo, and, besides, there is no occasion to publish more than is needful of the miserable past while that unhappy girl is lingering between life and death. Bad as she is, and deeply as I have been injured by her, I cannot utterly forget that I once loved her in her earliest youth and beauty. I will not betray her—at least not yet—not now."

"But at any rate you can surely give me some reason why this announcement was not made sooner?" said Otho, persistently. "It was certainly a betrayal, if you so call it, to permit this to go so far ere you gave her or me cause to believe you had claims on her."

"You are wrong, quite wrong there," said the young man, coldly. "Estelle knew as well as words and threats could accomplish that I had no intention of relinquishing my rights over her. She bribed me again and again to procure silence, but I never gave her any such absolute promises. And I have been ill," he added, with a peculiar smile, "long and dangerously ill, as I daresay my appearance betokens, from the effect of an 'accident,' and the only wonder is that I have regained strength to be at all to save you and her from a fresh crime. However so it is, and I will not fail to be at hand in case my countess wife should not recover or to cheer her recovery by the certainty that her real husband is still alive and anxious to establish his rights and take his place at her side in her ancestral halls. Farewell, Captain Fitzwarren. Do not fear that I shall again disappear from the stage. Your address is patent to the world. Here is mine for your edification."

Handing Otho a card, Fitzwarren jumped into a hansom and drove rapidly away ere the bystanders recovered their astonishment.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Upon his hand she laid her own; Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone, And shot a chilliness to his heart, Which fixed him beyond the power to start— He could not loose him from its hold.

"It is no use, Esther, I can't do it; and if I did we should both be miserable," exclaimed Jonas, dashing away a fragrant Havana from his lips, and starting up from the luxurious reading-chair which had descended to him from the relative whose studious habits had used it for a very different purpose than mere sensual indulgence.

"You mean you cannot marry me, after pledging your word as an honourable man that you would do so?" said the woman, with unnatural calmness.

"Well, they say in law no oath is binding under compulsion, and I'm sure my promise to you was fully released if that is the case," returned Jonas, laughing bitterly. "No, no, old girl; a jest is all very well, and if you had as much money as I have to offer me, and the tables were turned, then it would be all a different matter. But as it is I'll risk all a woman's spite can devise, and send you about your business rather than bind myself in such a noose. So now you know the worst, and you can do your worst, unless you're wise enough to accept my terms."

"Which are—?" she asked.

"A moderate annuity according to my means, or a sum down," he resumed, more hopefully; "and your engagement never to trouble me more."

"That is so impossible condition in the bargain that it well nigh promises to break it off," she returned, in the same tone. "May I ask what has so changed you during the last few weeks, Jonas?"

"Yes, if you like," he interrupted, hoarsely. "It is soon told. It is because I know the difference between an angel and a fiend; and because so long as Pauline Lovett is in life I will not give up the hope or the right to win her."

"When she comes out of prison you may think differently," observed Esther, bitterly; "she will be a good deal altered then."

"I could almost say I wish she may be," he returned, eagerly. "I should like there to be rather less difference between her lovely nature and my degraded self. But no, nothing could sultry that girl's purity or mar her exquisite beauty. Pahaw, Esther! do you dream that I could wed you after knowing and loving her? I would die first."

"That is glibly said, but not so pleasant to perform," she replied. "Take care, Jonas. Many a true word is lightly spoken, and I am not to be trifled with. I can promise you. Think once again. I shall not give you farther warning after this agreeable interview. You may chance to wed the gallows if you decline my hand. I don't think it any great vanity if I consider myself the more desirable bride of the two."

"It is false, utterly false. I have no crime on my conscience that would bring such a fate," he cried, eagerly; "and no one would credit such heavy folly as your accusation would be. I defy your raving nonsense, Esther. You'll think better of it."

"Hullo! Have I interrupted a little family squabble, Jonas, my boy?" exclaimed a rough

voice, and the door, which had opened without the engrossed speakers perceiving the slight noise, admitted the burly form of Nicholas Lovett.

"Lovett! You here? How did you get in?" asked Jonas, with no very pleasant welcome in his tone. "I did not hear the bell."

"That's because you were so pleasantly engaged," returned Nicholas, with a forced laugh. "Pray is it a matrimonial disagreement or lovers' quarrel? Is this Mrs. Jonas Dawes or only—"

"Don't be foolish, Nicholas. Esther, go away; I've no more to say to you, and Mr. Lovett and I have matters to talk over. Perhaps you would like something to eat and drink before you leave?" he added, soothingly, as she turned from the spot. "If so they will give it you in the other room."

"Thank you, no. I have had quite enough since I came to satisfy any appetite," she replied, coldly. "I think I shall just catch the next train. Good-day, Mr. Lovett. Good-bye, Jonas. Perhaps I shall hear from you in the morning; if not I will consider the matter settled."

She closed the door behind her, and for some moments her steps sounded heavily, then died away, while the closing of the hall door appeared to be taken her final departure.

The two men she had left were silent for some seconds.

Then the younger broke silence.

"I thought you were out of the country before this, Lovett. What on earth keeps you here like a moth round a candle? You'll trifle an hour too long, maybe. It was just madness being in the court at that trial."

"Oh, it suits me," returned the reckless man. "I want excitement; and, besides, it was rare sport to see all the dunderheads at fault. And the girl was a brick. I was prouder of her than Ruth can be of her grand countess that she thinks so much of."

"So I should think; and were you not a base villain to permit that innocent, pure creature to suffer in your stead?" exclaimed Jonas, fiercely. "I'd a great mind to reveal all, that I had, and it's not too late, Nicholas, even now."

"You're not such an idiot," said Lovett, sneeringly, looking round him. "Harkye, Jonas, I can with a word strip you of all that you've got as your lawful heritage. I could plunge you into beggary—ay, and make you my comrade in prison, instead of this comfortable domain. And if I swing you shall not go scot-free. Every old secret shall be told—yes, even to—"

"Hush, hush, man!" interrupted Jonas. "There's no use shouting out secrets as if you were speaking in Parliament. There's only one word uglier than what you have on your lips; but, Nicholas, that word is—murder!"

And he put his head so close to Nicholas Lovett's ear that the sound hissed like a serpent in his brain.

"Well, well, don't be unreasonable, Jonas. I'm not going to peach, unless you begin the game yourself; and what brought me here this morning was only to procure money to take me out of the way altogether. I'm tired of all this hiding, especially now the girl's gone. I got precious fond of her, though she was so nice in her scruples. And, harkye, Jonas, I'll do you a good turn even at the last. When all's safe you can get her freed by telling the truth, and what's more, the secret you've got will perhaps purchase her as a wife—d'ye see? So if you do the handsomest thing by me you won't lose by it."

"Nicholas Lovett, you are a very fiend to tempt me to destruction!" exclaimed Jonas, recoiling from the low-spoken words. "Man, it would not avail; that girl would die before she'd have me."

"Yes; but she mightn't like me to come to an unpleasant end," returned Lovett, nodding; "she's mighty strict notions on that point I fancy, and you could work them at your pleasure. There, I'll warrant if you manage well she'll be your wife in three months; and five hundred or so isn't too much for all I've got you, and a pretty creature like Pauline, with a touch of the angel in her, as one may say."

"I'd give twice that if I were sure—twice that if I were sure!" exclaimed Jonas. "Man, to win Pauline I'd ruin body and soul too. There, now, give me a little more idea of what could be done and what is to be my security."

The men conversed for some time in lower tones, that were inaudible save to a pair of keen ears which were strained to catch every word.

When the dialogue flagged, and there were symptoms of restlessness in the movements of both the speakers, a figure dropped stealthily and slowly from a tall tree near the apartment, then glided like a ghost within the shelter of the thick plantation, that was running riot in its tall luxuriance.

Esther Farm knew neither terror nor fatigue in the bitter agony and resentment of her soul. As if she were again a girl she had claimed that lofty tree which shaded the very windows of the apartment where the dark plotting had been carried on.

She now bounded rather than walked over the miles that divided her from the railway station;

and the swiftness of the train appeared but tortoise-like to her impatience.

Once in London, she sprang into a cab, and, ordering the man to drive rapidly for double fare, she sank back in its recess and closed her eyes, as if to consider more calmly the course she should adopt.

"Shall I ring, ma'am?" said cabby as he stopped at his destination.

But Esther sprang out, without even a reply, and thrust so sum that fairly astonished the recipient into the man's hand.

"Is Mr. Brereton within?" she asked as a woman answered her impetuous summons.

"My lord is in, I believe, but I don't know that he can see you," was the lofty reply.

"Lord? I don't want any lord!" returned Esther, angrily; "I want Mr. Stanley Brereton."

"Very likely, ma'am; but you see he's got a title now, seeing that his far-away cousins were drowned the other day in a yacht; but he only heard of it yesterday, and I don't suppose he half understands it himself," continued the garrulous landlady. "He's as cool as a cucumber about it, as one may say, and I'm glad and sorry in a breath, for I took quite a fancy to him as a lodger you see, ma'am."

"I must see him—it's a life-and-death business—whether he is lord or commoner," returned Esther, eagerly. "Do, my good lady, tell him that I have written to tell him which will move him more than wealth or rank. Quick—quick—if you would save him from a great sorrow!" she added, her feverish brain scarcely able to endure even this brief suspense.

Mrs. Thompson hesitated for a minute, with a vague idea that the applicant was a lunatic.

But Esther settled the matter by suddenly entering the hall, and, slamming the door behind her, she said, in a commanding tone:

"Now take me to my lord. He'll not be displeased, I promise you, with the visit."

Mrs. Thompson was fairly driven to obey, and hastening upstairs with her impatient guest close on her heels, she tapped at the sitting-room door, where the *ci-devant* and struggling barrister was sitting in deep thought, his head on his hand and his eyes fixed on the letters before him.

Even the impetuous Esther paused in somewhat riveted awe as she gazed.

There was such unmistakable sadness in the noble features, such utter abrogation of self and all that belonged to mere worldly considerations in that thoughtful gaze, that it seemed to repulse the selfish and ambitious passions of the woman as she looked on the tableau thus presented.

But Mrs. Thompson had less scruples, and perhaps some curiosity as to the nature of her unknown companion's urgent business.

She at least could not comprehend the secret meaning of her lodger's incipient apathy to his sudden accession to rank and wealth.

She could not divine that all which would have brought exultation and joy to most would but have added to the depression of the new peer; and her mind and heart were utterly unequal to the task of entering into the more elevated and unpractical views of life and its happiness which were torturing her valued lodger.

"Please, my lord, here's a person who insists on seeing you, and, if it's wrong, it's not my fault, my lord, for she wouldn't be put off anyhow," was the introduction of Esther Farm to the presence of the newly made peer.

Stanley raised his eyes eagerly.

Surely he could not entertain the wild hope of meeting the glance of her he so madly loved; he could not think that Pauline Lovett would have escaped from her bondage to bless his longing eyes, still less that she would have broken through her scruples to visit an unbetrothed lover, yet there was an unmistakable disappointment in his look as his eyes rested on the worn and wasted features of Esther Farm.

His tone had a perhaps unintentional sharpness as he asked her business with him.

"My lord, I must first know whether I am safe in my communications; rank and wealth make strange differences in persons' feelings. It is not for me to judge whether it is important to you that Pauline Lovett can be saved from her miserable fate."

"Of course—of course!" exclaimed Stanley, eagerly. "Can you doubt it, woman? Speak—speak, if you have aught that is true or reliable, to say that can affect that angel girl!"

"It is well—very well," returned Esther, calmly. "If you have a true heart, and a firm brain, all may yet be well. Lord Brereton—if that is your name—I have come to reveal to you the name of the real criminal—the actual murderer of the unfortunate Basileigh Freshfield, and the thief of the splendid jewels!"

(To be continued.)

A NEW CHINESE FRIESE.—A new Chinese frigate constructed at the Kiangnan arsenal, Shanghai,

was launched recently. It is believed that this is the largest ship ever built in China; the gross measurement is about 2,700 tons; the engines of 400 nominal horse power, but capable of working up to 1,800, have also been made in China, together with all the pumps, capstans, etc., required for use on board. It is expected that, when complete, the ship's draught of water will be about 20 feet, with a displacement of 2,690 tons, and 12 nautical miles speed per hour. The battery will comprise twenty-six 40-pounder rifled guns, and two 90-pounders also rifled. This ship shows that the Chinese have really made great advancement within the last four years; only four foreigners have had to do with the construction, viz., naval architect, engineer, draughtsman, and shipwright. All the work has been done by Chinese artisans, and has been turned out in good style.

BOB'S LAST RACE.

ON a bright autumn day two young people, fair to look upon and well mated, being none other than Mr. Robert Lovell and Miss Edith May, who in a moment of ecstasy had promised eternal fidelity each unto the other, were walking on a smooth country road at an hour in the middle of the afternoon.

There was a deep subject between them, for they talked earnestly and volubly. She seemed to be pleading and begging, and he explaining and arguing. They walked on and on, mile after mile, and the light began to fail and the shadows to lengthen.

She had his arm, and they were both deeply interested, therefore they did not notice their surroundings.

They came to a huge white fence, ten feet high and extending either way for a long distance. Opposite to them was a grated gate which could be pushed up or pulled down as was required. Within the gate was to be seen a vast elliptical space and a series of high seats.

The two walkers suddenly stopped.

"Here we are at the terrible racecourse!" said Miss Edith.

"Yes, here we are," responded the other, with a touch of suspense in his tone. "I did not mean to come hither I am sure. It was pure accident; that is unless you meant to bring me here," he added, looking at his companion with a smile.

"No, no, Bob," replied she, sadly; "I am doing my very best to lead you away from it, and I could not consistently wish you to even look at it again."

"Do you really hate and fear it so much?" asked

"Fear it, Bob? Oh, if you could only feel how I dread it and its influence on our happiness. When you are my husband I cannot influence you as I can now, and there will be always hanging over my head and over yours, too, this terrible risk which you love to take so much. I implore you to give it up—to free your hands of all business in it; to renounce the company of all the evil men who gather about it!"

She clasped her hands upon his arm and raised her face to his. He looked at her. In the dim light he beheld her paleness, her tears, and her trembling lips.

He reflected. He considered. He could not give it up as he would have relinquished any evil habits, for there were other interests than his bound up in the act. Still he loved the girl too deeply not to promise something. He rapidly ran over in his mind what he might sacrifice.

"I cannot leave it off all at once, Edith—"

"Oh, Bob."

"No. Listen. There are six horses entered for the race, and my 'Eclipse' is one of them. She is the favourite, and all the betting men in all the cities in the country have made bets upon her, or against her, and if I should withdraw her my life would be in danger, and my reputation would suffer even with the most upright men. I love my horses devotedly, but I would quit them all if you only breathed a wish that I should. True, you do not. You wish me to give up racing them for money. Edith, I'll do it. But I must run my horse to-morrow; and if I win I will quit the turf after the race and sell every horse but those we shall want for ourselves and for our own use."

"If you win? Suppose you do not?"

The young fellow waited for a moment; it was an awkward question, and the spectacle of the dreadful consequences appeared to him in a very vivid light. He turned a trifle pale and thrust his cane deep into the sand.

"Tell me, Bob—suppose you don't win, suppose 'Eclipse' comes in third or last?"

"I cannot bear to dream of such a thing," responded he, in such a hollow voice that she started a little; "I fear it would ruin me."

"Bob," said she, earnestly and distinctly, "have you risked your fortune upon this one race—upon this

venture, in which the smallest accident may destroy your chances and you?"

"Yes," said Bob.

He hung his head.

She said no more. Her slender figure shivered with agitation, but she wheeled about and walked her lover straight towards home again. Never a word crossed her lips about horses and racing until they were about to part.

She spoke of other things, and talked even pleasantly and cheerfully; but when they came to her door she put her arms about his neck.

"Bob," said she, "you say if you win to-morrow you will leave horse-racing for ever, and you also say if you do not win you will be a ruined man! Is that it?"

"Yes," said Bob, "I fear that is the case."

"Very well," replied she; "now I understand. Good-night, Bob."

They said good-night as lovers have said it from time immemorial, and were a long time about it, as all lovers are.

But no sooner had the young man disappeared from sight than the young lady developed from an elegant girl into a creature of great energy and decision.

She astonished her maid—a pretty minx—by asking her very suddenly if the groom of the racecourse stables was not a lover of hers.

"Y—yes, Miss Edith."

"Well, now, if he would oblige me would you feel greatly gratified?"

"Of course, miss."

"If he should disoblige me?"

"Why, if he dared to do that, miss," said the pert beauty, "I'd give him such a wagging that he'd never get over it. Disobliges my mistress! I'd like to see him!"

She shut up both her fists and looked dreadful.

Miss Edith laughed.

"Now, Polly, I want you to put on your hat, go directly to him and tell him I wish to see him instantly, and when you are on your way back you may tell him what you have just told me."

Polly disappeared while the resolute Miss Edith partook of supper—for even the most spiritual and delightful of her sex must eat.

By the time she had completed her repast the pretty maid had returned. She was directed to bring her lover into a small sewing-room adjoining the sitting-room.

The girl stared, but obeyed.

The groom, not an ill-looking fellow, came in. He bowed, and turned scarlet.

Miss Edith proceeded to business cleverly. She put a series of sharp questions, such as you notice women always do when they take matters into their own hands.

"Is Mr. Robert Lovell's horse in the club stables in the racecourse?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Are persons admitted to the stables as they please to go?"

"Bless you, no, ma'am! If they was, half the horses would be maimed by the roughs of the course, so as to make 'em lame on the day of the race—that wouldn't do."

"But the grooms sleep a little, especially in the night-time, don't they?"

"Why—why—I dunno'. We have to work precious hard, miss. We have to exercise the horses, and speed 'em, and groom 'em like babies. 'Tain't surprising if we should drop off now and then."

"Oh, no; I would if I were you. Tell me whose horse is favourite for to-morrow?"

"Mr. Robert Lovell's 'Eclipse,' ma'am."

"Whose is second favourite?"

"Mr. Lawrence Black's 'Telegraph.'

"Lawrence Black!"

Miss Edith knew the name well enough.

He was an odious man of good family, great reputed wealth, but also a man of violent passions and evil character. He was handsome, but a Mephistopheles. He had once shown some regard for Miss Edith, but that young person placed a blight on him so quickly that he had an opportunity to hate her before he could love her.

Therefore she heard that he was to be a rival of her lover's with little favour—nay, with actual distrust.

She thought for a moment.

"Has he got much money depending on this race?"

"Yes, ma'am. So I'm told, least wise. He thinks his horse is better than 'Eclipse'."

"Does he?"

Then she thought for a moment more.

"Now I'm going to ask a favour of you."

He cast a glance at Polly, who secretly shook her head menacingly at him.

"I want to be admitted to the stable and to be

hidden there where I can watch 'Eclipse' all night long, and I want you to manage to get me in and out without being seen."

"The groom gasped:

"What, ma'am?"

She repeated it.

Then she gave him some money.

Polly glared at him. He came to his senses, and in a few moments he began to think of it seriously. He began to make plans, and after a sore puzzle he assented, after another dose of money.

This seemed to be a rather harum-scarum idea for a young lady to possess, but you only get one to love you and she will become a giant of daring, invention, and action.

At ten, Miss Edith, habited in a thick shawl and wraps, secretly emerged from her house and wended her way to the long and lofty stables alone. As she approached a small door opened before her and she entered quietly.

It was dark in spite of a lantern hung from the ceiling, and there was a loud tumult of stamping hoofs and heavy breathing of the horses.

The groom showed her a grain closet; he pointed to it; she opened it. He showed her a ventilator in the door and pointed to a horse exactly opposite and whispered "Eclipse."

She comprehended, and stepped within the closet and shut the door.

She peered out of the ventilator and began her vigil over the beautiful animal who was of so much importance to her and hers.

Thus did the anti-racing Miss Edith become an aider of horse-racing. Not a movement of the horse escaped her eye. She became accustomed to the dim light and could see very clearly.

Eleven o'clock passed, then twelve, then one; still Miss Edith gazed out with unwearied eye. She was not apprehensive; she was only persistent. Then two o'clock. Still the stable was undisturbed. The lantern shed down its uncertain ray, and still the horses breathed loudly and now and then kicked at their stalls.

Suddenly, at about half-past two, two men seemed to rise up out of the darkness like shadows. Miss Edith was wide awake. They cautiously approached "Eclipse," who was standing up. They soothed her in whispers. Then presently one stooped down and gently lifted into his lap one of her hind feet. What Miss Edith saw done was developed on the next day.

At ten in the morning the report ran round the town that "Eclipse" was lame.

Mr. Bob, white as a sheet, ran to the stables. The groom had told Polly, and Polly had in turn told her mistress, who was nervous and agitated.

She called her phaeton and drove at once to the stable.

There was a crowd of men rushing hither and thither, furious with anger and violently denouncing Mr. Robert Lovell, who was accused of rascality.

Miss Edith demanded to see the horse.

They led "Eclipse" up before her.

The splendid, intelligent animal seemed to look imploringly at her; and he held one trembling hind foot just off the ground.

Miss Edith whispered to Bob, who was standing by:

"Can't you find out the cause, Bob?"

"No," said he; "we have looked in vain. It must be that she snapped some of the small muscles of her leg. I shall have to withdraw her. I suppose you know what that means, Edith."

She laughed and then quickly became serious and angry. She spoke to the groom.

"Take a knife, lift up the horse's lame foot and you will find a fine bit of silk thread tied tight about—about—well, the ankle I suppose."

The groom darted to the horse and did as he was told.

A furious cry burst from the assembled men.

"Who did it, miss? Who did it?"

"I cannot tell you," she replied, calmly. "I know the gentleman, and you will also know him when he is safe out of the country. He belongs to your association, and I saw the act done in the stable at half-past two this morning. The gentleman will resign his membership within forty-eight hours."

This was all.

She would not say another word.

"Come, Bob, get in with me and we will drive home at once."

"No, I must stay," replied Bob. "You have saved me thus far, Edith, now I will look after 'Eclipse' until the race is over."

"Eclipse" won three straight heats without a baulk or break.

That night Bob left the club.

Men stared. Could it have been Bob who lamed "Eclipse"?

Then the secretary read the resignation of Mr. Lawrence Black.

Everybody hissed and ran to take Bob by the hand. He has quitted horses now, and is devoted to training children.

R. F.

THE HOMES OF OTHER DAYS.

The Anglo-Saxon *ham*, or home, consisted generally of a *heal*, or hall, with little rooms, or *burs* (afterwards bowers) on the outside, surrounded by an earthwork or wall, enclosing the house and a yard (*geard*). The remains of these Saxon homes are often mistaken for early camps. Here the Anglo-Saxon nobleman or gentleman kept a rude state, according to his means; and a very slight investigation into the manners of our forefathers shows how much they needed the polish and refinement of their Norman conquerors. They had strength of mind and body—the latter predominating—but both obscured by sloth, engendered by habitual drunkenness. There can be no doubt that the Norman Conquest infused into our race the energy which is our national characteristic. If—as there is abundant reason to believe—many of the Saxon noblemen were like Athelstane of Coningsburgh, depicted by Sir Walter Scott in "Ivanhoe," we cannot wonder at their incurring the ridicule and contempt of the more refined Normans. The English language survived because the unmarried among the conquerors selected wives among the beautiful Saxon maidens, and these would naturally teach their children their native tongue. The same thing had happened before when the Scandinavian adventurers who settled in Normandy married in that country.

The manners of the Anglo-Saxons previous to their conversion to Christianity are shown in the romance of "Beowulf"—supposed to have been composed before they left the continent—and also in early graves. Drinking-cups and buckets are frequently found; the former are made so that they will not stand upright, so that they must be emptied at a draught; and the latter were used to carry the ale or mead into the hall. The hall generally consisted of one apartment (the retainers using it at night as a sleeping-room), but sometimes it had an upper room, approached by a *stayer*, or stair. The house and its belongings were nearly always of wood; the only Anglo-Saxon words for building are, in fact, *timbrian* and *atimbrian*, to make of timber. *Ham* was not the only term for the dwelling; as a residence it was called *hus*, from its chief room, *heal*; or as an enclosure *tūn* (origin of town).

A Saxon never dined in private—it was considered disgraceful to do so. Seated on the *healstol*, or high seat, he dispensed a lavish hospitality, every one being welcome. The rude walls were often covered with hangings, sometimes richly ornamented, on which arms and trophies of the chase were hung. The fire was made in the middle of the apartment, the smoke finding its way out of an aperture in the roof. Wood was generally burned, though it is believed the Saxons were acquainted with the use of coal. Breakfasting about nine o'clock, the Anglo-Saxon was ready for his dinner or principal repast at three, after which was the *afen-mete*, or evening meat, the time for partaking of which is uncertain. Mr. Wright thinks the last-named meal was not originally in use among our Saxon forefathers. If the food was deficient in quality it was made up in quantity. The great oak forests fed large droves of swine, and bacon was largely eaten. Boiling seems to have been the chief mode of cooking meat, which was eaten with a great deal of bread (so that a servant was called *hafg-ætten*, or loaf-eater) and vegetables. Many of our culinary terms are Saxon, such as kettle (*cetyl*), cook (*coc*), kitchen (*cycene*), and broth (*brot*).

Wine (*win*, from Latin *vinum*) was used by the Saxons, though only on state occasions, a few only of the monasteries appearing to have had vineyards. While indulging in their potations the Saxons had various persons to afford them amusement, such as the *hearpere* or harper, *pipere* or piper, *gligman* or gleeman. Minstrels were always welcomed to the hall, and for this reason spies generally came in this disguise. They had also the game of *tafel*, supposed to have been like backgammon, to beguile weary hours either in the hall or the bower of the ladies. The beds in the latter were of the rudest description and generally consisted merely of a bench with a sack filled with straw placed upon it, hence the words for this article were *bane* (a bench) and *strew* (straw). People went to bed perfectly naked, and the bed-clothes consisted of a sheet (*scyte*) and a coverlet (*bed-felt*). It is surprising to find that hot baths were frequently used, derived probably from the Romans.

INTELLIGENCE from Chieti announces that Rossetti, of Castel di Sangro, one of the brigands condemned to death, and who escaped from the hulks of Pescara, has been killed in an engagement with the public force.

An election of a town councillor in which the provisions of the Ballot Bill were applied, though im-

perfectly, has already taken place at Boston, Lincolnshire. The old form of voting papers was used, but they were given in folded and deposited in an open box, instead of being made secure by lock and seal.

STEAM PAVIOUR'S RAMMER.—A paviour's rammer, actuated by steam, has recently been employed in the Rue Chaptal, Paris. This mechanical appliance is the invention of M. Ligner, and consists of a small Lenoir portable donkey engine that operates a heavy steel rammer. The rapidity of execution of the work results in great economy of labour, and is said to more than compensate for the outlay on cost and fuel.

AN ANTIQUARIAN TREASURE TROVE.—In cleaning out the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville the workmen have found under a mass of rubbish the statues of Louis XIV. and François I., which formerly decorated the Court of Honour, and which were believed to have disappeared for ever. The former, the work of Nicholas Coustou, has hardly suffered; but the other is in a piteous state. However a restoration is not considered impossible.

WEIGHTS OR BELLS.—The present bells of the Cologne Cathedral, which were cast as early as any others, in the middle of the 15th century, weight one 12,000 lb., the other 22,400 lb. The Kaiserglocke, which will shortly be cast, will be the largest swinging bell in the world, for those at Pekin and Moscow, which are larger, are fixed bells. The diameter on the lower rim will be 13 feet, the height being 17 feet, and weighs 50,000 lb. The following are the weights of some of the largest bells in Europe:—Vienna, 36,000 lb.; St. Peter (Rome), 38,000 lb.; Notre Dame de Paris, 34,000 lb.; "Big Ben," 32,340 lb.; and Erfurt, 27,936 lb. According to the German papers, the Emperor has made a "munificent and truly imperial gift" by sending 22 French guns from the Strasburg park to be melted into the "Kaiserglocke," which is to hang in the south campanile. The weight of these guns is 500 cwt., valued at 3,740L

NATIONS AND MEN.

HISTORY ever repeats itself, both as to nations and men, and hence have arisen the various cyclical theories and the notion that the whole human race is a gigantic man, and goes through all the phases of human existence in like manner. We demur to the conclusion as to the human race, for it has a power of rejuvenescence not included in the phases of human existence to which the individual is liable. But the doctrine seems true concerning all special aggregations of men, whether on the small scale of a family, or the large scale of a nation, or the material scale of social organization, or the spiritual scale of sects or religions, in which we may include schools of philosophy. They all evince the same tendencies to rise with sudden energy, to culminate for a period more or less brief, then to fall, strictly according to the mechanical law of falling—slowly at first, but with rapidity ever increasing. There seems to be no rejuvenescence for these aggregations; they may be unmiminated or fossilized, but they can recover no new life except by such fusion with an external element as virtually destroys their identity.

The feudal culture of Europe has fallen into the lean and slumped pantaloons, and are long will find itself *sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* taste, *sans* everything. The commercial or politico-economic phase of social organization is at present on its trial, and has probably some time longer to last, but we suspect it has reached its zenith and is just beginning to tremble towards decline. But we note that, though all sections and phases of humanity seem fated to pass through the cycle, the rule does not hold good of humanity itself. The colossal man shows no signs of senility. On the contrary, his highest representative in any one millennium is superior in knowledge, intelligence, energy, and general morality, to the highest representative of the millennium preceding. The best class of Europeans of the present day are superior to the best class of Romans, who were superior to the best class of Assyrians, who were doubtless very superior to the best class of the men of the Stone Age.

So that it seems to be not any natural or inherent defect in human nature which causes the cyclical declensions, but rather some accidental defect in the principles upon which each cycle has been worked, some errors in the process of the experiments which men have been making upon themselves in the matters of politics, social organization, philosophy and religion. And observe that the original temporary success of every experiment by no means proves its process to have been without flaw, for while faith in a system is new and vigorous, or while men of exceptional ability guide and spur it, all such stumbling-blocks are leaped over and not even noticed. It is when it consolidates into a formula that the errors it contains begin to sprout which sooner or later will split it to pieces.

It is noteworthy that the duration of any phase

of human development, whether political, social, or religious, is generally in proportion to the strength of the moral element involved in it. The Greek ideal, aesthetic and unmoral, had a very brief term of independent existence. It has indeed lasted by its beauty to this day, but only as an appendix or ornament to principles of higher vitality. The Roman ideal based upon duty and discipline appears imperishable. It kept alive the Roman political existence for so long a period that the very time it took to die by inches was longer than the whole existence of most nations; it lives still at the foundation of the laws of most civilized peoples. The patriarchal principle in China, a most benevolent one in theory, seems to have been the chief instrument for keeping that huge mass of stagnation partially sweet.

The Jewish ideal, in its earnest faith and strict though uncatholic conscientiousness, exhibits to this day, after nearly three thousand years of existence, a vigorous vitality such as no other existing sectarian or caste ideal can show. The British sense of justice and fair play has been the true back stay of British institutions, and German honesty and steadiness are at the root of German thriving.

On the other hand, a marked defect of moral element has always been coincident with weakness, failure, or misfortune—as for example Spain in the seventeenth century, and every trouble which has befallen France from the Saint Bartholomew to the Commune of 1871.

Setting religious considerations altogether on one side, it appears from history that demoralization has almost invariably been followed by decadence, weakness, suffering, or humiliation of the nation, sect, class, caste, society, or institution, demoralized. The prevalence of the sterner virtues has usually been followed by success often much greater than might have been expected from the relative material strength of the victors.

In spite of all cynical sneers about Providence favouring the large battalions, Thermopylae and Marathon, Morgarten and Granson, Cressy and Agincourt, Holland's vindication of its independence in defiance both of Spain and Austria, are all historical facts, and there are plenty more where they come from. We are not absurd enough to maintain that virtue always prevails, or that the handful of heroes must always be the host even of cowards, but we think it the very plainest matter-of-fact that the sterner virtues and the earnestness and vigour which always accompany them do constitute a most important item of strength to the party that possesses them, and that the baser vices with the selfishness and perfidiousness that always accompany them are an equally certain element of weakness.

It really does not seem impossible that if some of these days, after all other conceivable experiments have been tried and found wanting, a nation were really to try to live righteously, observing the golden rule, and keeping selfishness in the background—the strong always helping the weak, and the weak having the grace to be thankful—the wise guiding the stupid, and the stupid having humility enough to be guided—every man sticking to truth and honesty, and doing whatever he had got to do as well as he possibly could—that said nation might be found to have driven a nail into the cyclical theory and stopped its rotation—might be found to have solved the problem of permanence, and surpassed in perfection and happiness all the Utopias of which poets and philosophers have ever dreamed.

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHENEY tried to look at Lord Dane again, and again failed.

He did lift his eyes finally as he said:

"Mr. Vassar has been murdered. I had it just now from your own servants."

"My servants? He was not here."

"He came here."

"By Heaven, was he following me? Did Heath kill him?"

"Perhaps so. Vassar was in a rage, a blind fury, when I saw him. They must have quarrelled."

"And Heath has gone. It looks bad."

The earl remained deeply thoughtful for a moment.

"By Heaven!" he said. "I hate him bitterly, but I'm sorry for him. I can afford to be if he has killed Sybil's father. It's a bad business all round. Can't it be a mistake?"

"I think it is true, but I will go and make inquiry if you like."

"If those papers are in existence Vassar must have had them with him."

"I think not. He told me in London that he should leave them in care of a safe person who would deliver them only to his daughter in case anything should happen to him."

"He might have said that only as a blind. Why should he put them out of his own possession?"

"For the very sake of keeping them from you should anything happen to him. He might have been afraid you would try to take them from him by force."

"Scarcely so bad as that I should hope," said the earl, contemptuously. "I am no assassin. But the question now is, had he the papers with him? The coroner must have taken charge of them if he had."

"Shall I go out and see what I can learn about the matter?"

Lord Dane rose to a sitting posture, and made an attempt to leave his bed.

But he sank back again, groaning:

"I can't do it."

"Do what, my lord?"

"Go and attend to this business myself. Can't you see, man, that I'm afraid to trust you? I believe you would like to secure the papers and serve me worse than Vassar did."

Cheeny assumed a look of deep sorrow.

"My lord, I swear to you that it is not so."

He lifted his hand.

Lord Dane sighed heavily.

"Go then."

Cheeny was gone two hours, during the first part of which time the earl tossed upon his bed in fretful impatience. The last hour was spent in changing his quarters and getting him comfortably settled in the magnificent and luxurious apartment Peters had caused to be prepared for him. Peters himself superintended the removal, and the other servants assisted, or hung about in a state between awe and stupefaction.

The windows of the new chamber commanded the main avenue, and the earl caused his couch to be drawn close beside one of them, that he might watch for Cheeny.

But for all that the valet got in without his master seeing him till he stood in the room.

"Mr. Vassar told me the truth, my lord," were his first words; "no such papers were found on him."

The earl looked relieved.

"I don't believe there are any such papers in existence," he said. "I have every reason for thinking that those which I destroyed were the genuine documents, and not copies. Why, Heath took them from a locker which his wife wore round her neck, and had worn from childhood."

"My lord, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Heath deceived you if he told you that. Mr. Vassar told me that he sent you copies of those papers in a letter—a letter of threatening—the bearer of which Mr. Heath intercepted, bought the letter from him, and so obtained the copies, which he gave you as the real papers. I think, if I remember rightly what you told me concerning that affair, that Mr. Heath's fifty thousand which you gave him depauperated on his producing those papers—did it not? Lucky it was for him he came upon the copies, or his game would scarcely have been so easy a one to play—Miss Sybil would have found him out before they had left London."

Lord Dane groaned.

"What a credulous idiot I was not to notice if they were copies! They couldn't have been—I couldn't have been so blind!"

"Vassar said they were very well got up, my lord. He prepared them himself, as a sort of trap, for fear a raid should be made on the genuine ones. The copies, however, were on new paper; the originals are nearly in rags."

Lord Dane ground his teeth.

"It is true," he groaned; "I remember thinking how well preserved they looked. The real papers will fall into Heath's own hand—I shall be at his mercy! By Heaven, I'd rather die, I believe!"

"My lord," said Cheeny, respectfully, "there is another way, if it pleased you."

"Another way? Tell it."

"You might call me impudent again."

"I certainly shall if you give me cause," responded the earl, angrily. "This other way—name it!"

"The true heiress might be disposed of—agreedably, my lord," he added, hastily, as the earl gave him a frowning look. "She knows nothing now, and is perhaps much happier in the humble station she has hitherto filled than she could be in another so far above what she is accustomed to. You, my lord, with your luxurious tastes and habits, would commit suicide in less than a month if you were once degraded from your present lofty position to the humble station in life, to the penury and discomfort, which to Perdita Lorne are happiness, since she has never known any thing better."

The earl was silent. He had long ago known, or been told by Rupert Vassar, that there was another person living who had a better right to the lofty position and magnificent revenues he held than he;

but he had always supposed this person to be a man. Now, according to Cheeny, instead of a man he had a woman to fight for his title and his possessions—a young and pretty woman, too; but that made no difference of course, only—

"I wish it was not a woman, Cheeny!" he said to his man.

"To be sure, my lord, it is something new to you to wrong a woman," observed Cheeny, without any significance in his tone or manner, though his master became angry at the remark.

"Tush! you know what I mean. Do you say she is in a very humble position now?"

"Very, my lord."

"I don't know what to do, Cheeny."

"You might marry her yourself, my lord," the valet suggested, with an evil glimmer in his cunning eyes.

"I? Not if she were Countess of Dane a million times over!" the earl exclaimed, with a horrified air.

"May I ask why not? A wife would not be much of an encumbrance to you, and she is rather a pretty little thing. You might do worse, indeed, my lord."

Cheeny could hardly keep the sneer out of his voice.

"Very well; I will do worse," returned the earl, impatiently. "You had a plan, you said, to help me out of this hobble. You did not mean to ask me to marry her, I hope?"

"No, my lord; though that would be safest, I am sure."

"Your plan?"

"She had better be put where she will be in no danger of marrying at all then."

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said the earl, uneasily.

"The only place I know of in this world where they don't marry is inside a convent."

"Absurd! You can't put her into a convent against her will."

"Then there are private retreats where rich people place inconvenient relatives to board, places where they can have every luxury except liberty."

"Ugh!" cried the earl, with a shudder; "you mean a mad-house. Never that, Cheeny—never!"

"You might ship her off to the wilds of the Antipodes?"

"She would come back by the first vessel."

"There remains then but one course open to you. Send her to Rylands, my lord."

"To Rylands?—that bleak, desolate place?"

"Desolate and bleak, perhaps, but secure by reason of its location, and outside of any common observation. Few know that you own such a place. No one would think of looking for her there; and money, my lord, which I know you would not grudge, could make even Rylands a very pleasant place to live in. Beside, this girl has no near friends to grieve after her—not even a lover for herself to regret. She would be more happily situated than ever she was in her life before, and she would be completely in your power."

Forgetting his usual coolness and studied carelessness of manner, Cheeny had grown vehement in his urgency.

He had his own reasons for desiring that Perdita Lorne should be sent to Rylands.

Lord Dane looked at him suspiciously.

"I don't understand your remarkable interest in this business, Cheeny. Is it an old sweetheart you are trying to provide for?" he asked. "You've only to say the word, my boy, and I'll provide for her just as handsomely without your telling any falsehoods."

Cheeny flushed hotly, and looked momentarily confused. Then he said, with hypocritical depreciation:

"I have a maiden aunt, my lord—a woman long past the prime of life—that I was thinking maybe you would make housekeeper for Miss Lorne. That is all, upon my honour."

"Your honour? I was not aware that you had managed to preserve such a thing," said the earl, dryly.

Cheeny looked at him for a moment, and dropped his eyes to hide the ugly flush in them.

"I was only jesting, my lord, of course. But my aunt would take the place, and would serve you well; and I should like to see her provided for."

"Humph! Well, I will think of it. It's an abominable piece of business altogether, but I will think of it."

"You would only need to furnish me with money, my lord. I would attend to everything."

"I dare say you would," Lord Dane said, sharply.

"You are a great deal too willing, Mr. Cheeny."

CHAPTER XXXII.

BEFORE the pair called the Earl and Countess of Dane had been in Paris for a week a letter came for "my lady," addressed in a strange hand. It was dated on shipboard, and announced the death of Rupert Vassar on board a vessel bound for Calcutta, when two days out. He had been buried at sea; it

said, and by his request, made when he saw what was coming, word was sent to his daughter by the first homeward-bound ship they met.

The brief communication enclosed a few lines of farewell and explanation from Vassar himself—purporting to be such, that is—in which he said only that he had changed his mind about meeting them in Paris, thinking it best for all parties that they should not meet for a year or two under all the circumstances.

My lady read this extraordinary epistle quite through before she stopped or looked up. She loved her father better than anything on earth. Her husband was watching her with writhing lips. He had not calculated on the trial it would be to him to see the face he worshipped whitewashed with anguish as Sybil's whitened then, to hear the music of the voice he loved so turned to wailing.

Would she ever lift her eyes he wondered as the graceful head drooped lower and lower, and the snowy eyelids seemed to grow rigid?

"Sybil," he called, at last.

She looked up then, such a dreary, agonized look, such a heart-wrung, weeping cry.

"Oh! Talbot, Talbot, papa is not coming at all; he never will come. I shall never see him again. He is dead and buried in the sea—dead and buried while I was so gay, so vain and happy here. How can I bear it?"

"My dearest love, if I might but comfort you," Volney said, kneeling down beside her and clasping her with his arm, while his heart beat with shame and remorse.

Sybil let her proud head drop on his shoulder, and suffered his self-reproachful caresses in silence, till at last, unable himself to endure the sight of her anguished and stricken face, Volney drew her to a couch, and, having established her upon it and summoned her maid, made an excuse to leave her to calm his own perturbed thoughts.

He went to his private room, closed and double-locked the door, and threw himself upon a seat.

He had a communication from Perdita which he had not yet read. But he was in no hurry, he could only think of Sybil and how he had wronged, cheated, and betrayed her.

Little he guessed what news was contained in Perdita's letter.

He opened it at last, and devoured the contents with horrified and dilating eyes.

In it she simply told him what she had found in the house in the Ghost's Hollow when she went thither to liberate Vassar, and, though she made no charge or indeed said nothing beyond the mere statement of the horrible fact, it was evident that she was at least afraid he might have known something of it or had some connection with it.

Volney sat stupefied with horror and wonder.

Sybil's father really dead, murdered!

By whom?

To do him justice his first thought was not that an obstacle had been removed from his doubtful path by the death of Vassar, but that thought came soon.

"If I had only waited," he said to himself, "I should not have needed to tell this last falsehood to Sybil, and, oh, Heaven, how many falsehoods are between her and me already!"

He mused gloomily for some moments.

"It is better as it is," he concluded, "after all. If she knew how he died she would insist upon returning to England and seeking his assassin. Now I must keep the English papers all from her and get her away with me to some hiding-place out of the way of tourists and meddlers of all sorts."

He went back to the room where he had left his young adored wife. He tried to speak and act naturally, displaying only the grief and sympathy that would be expected of him. But the horror that had fallen upon him when he read Perdita's letter could not be wholly banished from his eyes.

Sybil herself noticed it in the midst of her own overwhelming sorrow, and roused herself to say to him:

"It almost adds to my pain to see you sympathize with me so keenly, Talbot. Leave me alone; pray do, and go out and enjoy yourself."

"I enjoy myself?" Volney cried, indignantly. "My darling, you know I shall not know an instant's happiness till you consent to be consoled. I would have died for him, Sybil, indeed I would if that would have saved him."

At the moment Volney believed what he was saying. The thought that Sybil's father had been slain while shut into the prison to which he had decoyed him was terrible and almost unbearable.

Sybil consented at once, and thanked him when he proposed they should leave Paris for some quiet and retired spot.

She seemed eager indeed to be away from that grand, gay, beautiful city which she had longed so to

see, and in which the day before she had been so intoxicated with delight and anticipation.

Forgotten now seemed the splendours and ambitions which she had associated with her supposed lofty position as Countess of Dane.

Volney could scarcely conceal his exultation at this, to him, favourable change in her for whom his love was worship, or rather had become more like infatuation than affection.

Sybil seemed indeed wonderfully subdued. She clung to her husband with a now and tender dependence, sweeter to him than words could express.

To add to his amazement and gratification when they were about to depart Adèle signified her objection to leave the gay capital and Sybil coolly bade her remain, taking away with her instead a modest young French girl of far inferior pretensions but with an affectionate heart and a pure conscience.

Adèle, when she discovered this arrangement, privately gave the new maid her address, and asked her to write when they were settled.

Then they went away from Paris.

Volney sought and found a retreat, such as he wished, in a retired part of Normandy. A wild region it was, but picturesque and romantic. Here he discovered an old chateau richly furnished in an old-time style, and arranged to take it for a term from the owner, to whom it had come through his wife, who was now dead. The widower was going back to Paris, whence he had come, and was only too glad to let it at a moderate price.

Sybil was charmed with everything. There were a lake and a park, an ivy-grown lawn, a perfect wilderness of flowers everywhere, and a luxuriance of the lovely fruits peculiar to that portion of France.

Volney secured through his landlord some fine horses and an elegant carriage in place of the old-fashioned affair belonging to the chateau. He obtained besides a boat similar to a small yacht, light and graceful as a swan, and so easy of management that Sybil could control its movements, and soon learned to do so. This boat was of the most elegant workmanship, superbly fitted up, and became a great pleasure to both Sybil and Volney that gradually to it were removed their favourite books, Sybil's embroidery frame, her guitar, her brushes and pencils.

Any one who had known Sybil in the old days at Graystone would scarcely have recognized her now. She had packed away all her grand Parisian toilettes, her jewellery, her laces. She wore only black or white, and that of the simplest make and description.

Her mourning had not detracted from or even modified her beauty. That dazzling loveliness was not in the least dependent upon accessories.

Her husband was her adoring subject. He lived but for her. Take her out of his life and you took everything.

As for Sybil, she was used to devotion. She had been reared upon it, had breathed it all her life so far. She was fond and tender. She made him very happy, exquisitely so in her half-regal way, but he had never yet dared tell her the truth. When they had been at the Normandy chateau six months Sybil still believed herself Countess of Dane.

Volney Heath was like the man who built his house upon the sand. He lived as though he imagined they could go on for ever. He never saw an English paper. He would not have looked into one if it had come in his way. He would have blotted England from his memory and taught Sybil to do the same if it had been possible.

He could not help a haunting fear that the true Lord Dane was on his track, hunting him down, but he thought he was safe from his search.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CHANGE was coming. The beginning of that change came in a rather queer shape to the Normandy chateau.

There was a handsome terrace, or rather a broad colonnade, across the entire main front.

Sybil and Volney were out upon this terrace one evening at dusk. It had been a wild, stormy day, and that had kept them indoors till now when the clouds seemed about to break away. The sun was just setting in a lurid splendour, all the more vivid by contrast with the gloom and blackness still visible in the upper sky.

Sybil wore a black guaze dress without ornament save a single waxen-looking blossom her husband had just fastened at her white throat. The delicate leaves of this flower were not fairer than Sybil's exquisite face.

Her eyes shone with a lambent light, and her long, silky hair flowing loosely back seemed to frame the perfect head as in a halo. A slender, tall shape, proportioned like Payne, she moved beside her husband with a haughty, gliding grace that became her infinitely.

"It is a wonderful face," muttered one who had

come in sight of the pair and was watching them from a screen of thick vines, himself unseen—"lovely, but like a sleeping whirlwind, an enchanted tempest. How that white face would gleam in a passion, and those eyes—I wonder how they would look in a storm? As for the other—it's the man I'm looking for, sure enough. Poor fellow. He has a grand face too, in its way, only so reckless, so passionate. That man would fling away his sceptre and his crown if he were a king for the sake of the woman beside him. Oh, this love. Shall I show myself—now—hum—yes."

He lifted himself one step, and stood on a level with the pair concerning whom he had been commenting.

There was a red glow in the West yet—enough to set the tall, dark form and Vandeko face of the stranger in a sort of lurid flame.

Sybil and Volney both started at sight of him, and Volney staggered a little, as if he had received a blow.

The stranger bowed low, his black hat to his hand, and his rich cloak hanging across his arm. His face was very white, his hair and his eyes black as night; the latter so keen and penetrating in their glances that my lady experienced an odd thrill as she met it.

"I am on my way to Mabreuil. I am lost, and my horse is worn out. I come to crave your hospitality for the night," he said, in a low, melancholy tone, his eyes upon the floor, but full of unfathomable lights.

"You are welcome," answered Sybil, brightly, and bending a curious glance upon him.

The pallid lips of her husband parted, but uttered no sound.

What was there in this stranger to fill him with dread?

But perhaps it was only the horror he always experienced now of a strange face—above all an English one, as this seemingly was.

"I am called Baron Chandos," the stranger resumed, still without looking up; "and I cannot thank you sufficiently, noble Countess of Dane, for your kindness. Have I also his lordship's permission to tarry under your roof for a night?"

He looked at Volney suddenly, and Heath, while he murmured something intended for assent, felt his pulses vibrate with anger and alarm at what he fancied the mockery in the stranger's voice.

The next moment his brow cleared at the courteous promptings of hospitality, and he followed his beautiful wife as she conducted the Baron Chandos within doors, where a fire was burning.

The baron glanced carelessly at the sumptuous apartment, with its hangings of dark-red silk, its velvet chairs and other costly appurtenances. Then he advanced to the marble hearth and stood in the glow of the fire.

He had evidently been in the storm, for his clothes dripped water on the hearth.

"I have a change of garments in my knapsack," he said, "if you will kindly let a servant take it to a suitable apartment."

Sybil rang and gave the order.

The baron left the room in charge of one of the servants of the chateau, and was conducted to a chamber no less elegant than the one he had left, in which also a fire was burning.

The man who attended him assisted him to exchange his wet clothes for dry ones, and was then about to withdraw.

"Stay," said the baron, in French; "this is your master's apartment."

"Yes. A fire is being lighted in the room designed for monsieur le baron."

"Very well, you may go; I will find my own way back to the saloon presently."

When Baron Chandos found himself alone he examined the room in which he was, curiously, and with the air of a man seeking some clue.

His unsatisfied glance came back at last, and stopped at a magnificent painting which hung above the tall chimneypiece in such a manner as to catch the light effectively, a picture rich in colouring, and presenting such vivid and startling contrasts of light and shade as drew the eye involuntarily.

It was a singular subject, the picture of a man, nobly statured and strikingly handsome, but dark, cowering, crushed with shame. You read guilt in every line of the drooping figure, in every lineament of the convulsed and shrinking face.

The curious baron drew nearer. He studied a name pencilled in corner of the canvas—"Judas!"

The baron drew back suddenly as though he had seen a ghost.

"Queer—very," he muttered as he studied the picture again.

There was a door cut in the tapestried wall upon which his eyes fell presently.

"Does it lead to my lady's apartments, I wonder?"

he said to himself, low and softly, "or to some private repository of his lordship's?"

He arose and approached this door.

But at that moment some one tapped lightly in the hall, and before he could glide back to his place before the fire "his lordship" entered the room.

"Wonderful piece of tapestry this," remarked the baron, jauntily, affecting to be examining the silk embroideries.

Volney came hastily forward.

His face had an anxious expression in spite of his attempt to smile.

The presence of this self-possessed Englishman discomposed him exceedingly.

"My groom tells me your horse has gone lame, baron," he said, with an attempt at lightness; "he will be quite unable to continue the journey to-morrow. Pray consider my stables at your command."

The baron's keen black eyes flashed furtively.

"Wants to get rid of me," he thought, "and that is bad." "Thanks," he said, aloud, "I am but an idle wanderer. Time is of no value to me. As well here as there. Anywhere will do for me. If you permit I shall stay a day with you and her ladyship. Solon will be himself by that time."

He spoke with airy carelessness and nonchalance, and, locking arms with Volney as he concluded, expressed his readiness to adjourn to the saloon where he had left her ladyship.

Disturbed and angry though he was, Volney could not well refuse to walk thus with the strange baron.

Sybil was at the piano as they entered, trifling only with the ivory keys however.

She looked up as the stranger guest, disengaging himself from Volney, paused beside her.

"You are a magnificent performer, my lady, I am sure," he said, in his sweet voice, and again Sybil experienced that odd thrill as those deep, piercing eyes seemed to study her face.

She dropped her own white lids.

"I am not," she said, haughtily.

"You don't play?" he exclaimed, "not at all?"

"Very little."

He caught up a sheet of music.

"Will you oblige me, my lady? You shall play secundo."

And without waiting for her assent, or else taking that for granted, he drew a seat beside her and began to play the air of the duet he had placed upon the instrument.

His touch was a masterly one.

Sybil had a serious objection to the off-hand style and assurance of the strange baron, but as he played her own white fingers fell upon the ivory keys almost involuntarily, and while Volney stood bewildered the two—his wife and this Englishman, whom he already hated—floated off into harmonies so divine and etherealizing that they seemed to have forgotten his presence entirely.

The storm had set in again wilder than ever.

The wind tore at the trees in the avenue like a giant trying to uproot them. The rain beat at the tall stained windows of the old chateau like living creatures sobbing to get in.

"Who is he?" wondered Heath, watching his nonchalant guest, with his handsome white face, his tossing black hair, and gleaming eyes. "I don't believe he is a Chandos, I don't believe he is a baron any more than I am a lord."

He stood at one of the windows for a long time, then he walked about discontentedly, but he never approached the pair at the piano. He only watched them gloomily.

Sybil scarcely seemed herself. Her beautiful, excited face fairly emitted radiance.

An hour passed thus, perhaps longer.

Then Baron Chandos suggested that her ladyship must be tired, and, heedless of her disclaimer, rose from the instrument.

Sybil rose also with a long sigh expressive of her pleasure.

"I have not enjoyed anything so much since we came into Normandy," she said.

Poor Heath put his hand to his heart.

"I thought she had grown to love me at last," he murmured.

"Pardon me, baron," Sybil resumed, with a sudden regretful accent, "you came in wet and weary; you must be hungry, and we have offered you nothing. But I will soon mend that," and she touched a little silver knob beside the chimneypiece.

A servant came instantly.

"May I give the order myself, my lady—may I have lunch—it is not much I want—may I have it here?"

"You may have anything you like, baron," laughed Sybil.

Her hantour had all vanished. Her husband looked on in amazement.

"You will bring me a cold broiled bird, some rolls,



[THE COMING STORM.]

a glass of milk, and a bottle of champagne, neither more nor less precisely," said the baron to the waiting servant, who immediately vanished.

While he was gone the baron and Sybil chatted like old friends.

Heath had seated himself in the embrasure of a window, and the velvet curtains nearly concealed him. Neither his wife nor his guest seemed to know he was in the room, or to think about him at all—at least so it looked to him in his unfitness and anger.

The baron questioned Sybil—politely, of course—of her English experiences, and expressed surprise at her knowing so little of London. Then he drew from her that she had lived at Graystone during the eight years preceding her marriage; she told him who her father was, and at the name, Rupert Vassar, the baron's black eyes kindled, and his white face grew whiter if possible. He rose to his feet and stood tall and solemn upon the marble hearth, while he swept the long, luxurious room with an eagle glance.

"He is looking for me," thought Heath. "He is about to question Sybil concerning her father's death. The truth will come out. She will learn that her father did not die at sea, but was murdered at Leuseligh."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE excitement which followed the finding of Rupert Vassar's murdered body in the Ghost's Hollow exceeded anything that had been known at Leuseligh for years.

Whichever way Perdita turned she was compelled to hear the awful subject discussed, and, knowing what she did, it was agony to her. She could not hide herself in her own room from it. The horrible whispers, the dreadful surmises, the rumours and suppositions, more frightful even than the reality, still followed her.

"I can't endure it, and I won't," she said to herself. "It's a bad business enough without my getting mixed up with it any more, and I know I shall if I stay here. I'll go back to London."

And back to London she went in spite of everything Aunt Lois—who felt much aggrieved—could urge.

To say that she was happy and at ease when she got there would not be true. The affair had reached London before her and been largely taken up by the sensational prints of the day.

She met it at the street corners if she went out, the news-boys cried it, and the dumb walls applauded it. At home her adopted mother was really indignant because she would not talk of it, and she so fresh from the scene too.

Fortunately as yet Volney Heath's name had not been connected with the tragic affair.

It was perhaps two weeks after Perdita left Leuseligh that a letter came to her, addressed in a very elegant but strange hand. Ridiculous as the supposition seemed, Perdita could only think of Lord Dane, and the usually self-possessed girl trembled as she held the letter in her hand before opening it.

She went away into her own room, into which Mrs. Lorne's curious eyes could not follow her.

It was a luxurious-looking little room, notwithstanding its poverty. The bed was white with ruffled pillows, the carpet, curtains and table-covers were in crimson. There were a bright, saucy picture of a little black-eyed tambourine-girl, with a diminutive monkey perched on her shoulder, and another of a young gipsy fortune-teller, in a short yellow skirt, and scarlet scarf.

Perdita laid the letter down on the table with the superscription uppermost.

"Who else can have written to me?" she was saying to herself; "and I am certainly out of my senses to imagine it is he. He write to me!"

She laughed in scorn at her own folly in dreaming of such a thing. Then she took up the letter again and slowly opened it.

The first words sent the blood into her cheeks like fire, and her heart into her very throat with agitation. It began by calling her:

"Perdita, darling!"

She tore the letter open to look at the end on the inside page. It was signed:

"Talbot!"

Her heart was throbbing to pain then. She sat down in a chair to still it, as she read, with bright, devouring eyes, the remaining words of this totally unexpected letter.

It told her that he, Lord Dane, had just discovered, through his valet, that it was she, Perdita, who had nursed him, instead of Rupert Vassar's daughter; that he had known her all the time to be Miss Channing, though by a strange but very natural error he had been led to believe that Sybil Vassar and Miss Channing were one.

It was sweet news to Perdita—all the sweeter and more agitating for being so unexpected.

So he had known her all the time! and it was she herself that he meant when he called her Sybil! It was for her his handsome eyes had glowed so, his voice thrilled! Oh! it was almost too sweet to be true!

Yes, far too much happiness for her!

That thought, though very soon, for our Perdita was too sensible a girl not to feel that the difference be-

tween her position and that of the wealthy nobleman was one which could not well be reconciled.

The letter went on to speak in passionate phrases of his love for her; but after the first thrills of gladness, the first trembling excitement, Perdita grew calm enough to read the letter through more critically, and she grew suddenly dissatisfied with it. Why she was dissatisfied she could not have told, unless it was because it—the letter—requested her to address Lord Dane under cover to his valet.

The excuse was to avoid attracting attention.

But how was anybody to know that she wrote to Lord Dane any the more for the letter being directed to himself openly?

She did not suspect for a moment what the real reason was for this request, but the fact of it being made brought her to a very sensible decision, though it made her heart ache to decide it so.

She did not answer the letter at all.

Cheeny—for it was he who had written to Perdita entirely without his master's knowledge—was rather nonplussed.

It had struck him as a remarkably ingenious arrangement to write to Perdita in the earl's name.

It would prepare her—that is, if she fell into his trap—for his final coup, and it would gratify his hatred of the man who had sneered at the idea of his (the servant's) honour.

It would gratify his hatred, his presumptuous envy of his master to use his name and Perdita's interest in him to betray her with.

But the young girl did not prove altogether so easily deluded as he had expected.

Perhaps the letter had miscarried.

That was not likely, however.

He wrote again in more impassioned and alluring language than before.

He was an uncommonly smart fellow and perhaps felt himself what he wrote.

Perdita answered this letter, but it was only to forbid his lordship writing to her any more, and to say that she could not and would not answer again.

"She's afraid," thought the wicked, scheming valet. "She's afraid, but she loves him or she would threaten to send the letters back. Fish! Of course she loves him. He's too handsome and fascinating for any of these foolish women to resist him. I shall keep on as I'm going—a letter now and then to keep her up to time—and, when all's ready, a bigger falsehood than all the letters together to fetch her. Ah, my lord, my dear lord, you and I will be even yet if we live long enough. I'll make you wish you had never been born."

(To be continued.)



MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Eglantine,"
"The Three Passions," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Blind Monk: Count Hugo once, but now the wreck
Of what I was. Oh, Hohenbeck!
The passionate will, the pride, the wrath,
That bore me headlong on my path,
Stumbled and staggered into fear,
And failed me in my mad career.

Golden Legend.

WHEN Wilfred Marshall returned to the assembly rooms with the carriage in which the unhappy lovers had intended to elope he found the utmost confusion prevailing.

Captain Anglesey was just recovering from the temporary faint into which he had fallen after the terrible and severe denunciation of Lord Kimbolton.

All the respectable portion of the community had left him, and he was surrounded only by some of the attendants of the rooms and a few penniless gamblers to whom he had at times lent money to relieve their pressing necessities. These latter, knowing him to be rich, probably expected as a return for their services a repetition of those favours they had already received.

Pushing the gaping and officious crowd on one side, Marshall hastened to his friend, and, lifting him from the chair upon which he had sunk, led him to an open window.

The fresh night air fanned his heated brow, which throbbed with feverish excitement. His breast was torn with deep sighs, the result of mingled emotions—disappointed love, the loss of his darling Marigold, and the insults he had received at the hands of her husband flooded his mind at the same time.

An irrepressible fury, a longing for the most signal and complete vengeance, seized upon him, and while his passion for Marigold burnt with tenfold force his hatred for Lord Kimbolton increased in a proportionate ratio.

"My poor friend," said Wilfred Marshall, "I can see it all. You have been discovered. Your designs have been frustrated. Marigold has been taken away by her husband, who has denounced you. Our career as Sja is at an end, and this unhappy rencontre has made you more miserable than you were before."

"You have indeed guessed rightly," replied Anglesey. "All that you have said is true; but, though Marigold is lost to me now, she is not lost for ever."

"Would to Heaven she were. While she lives I fear we shall have little peace."

[DELIVERING A MESSAGE.]

"Leave me, Wilfred," exclaimed Anglesey, with sudden energy. "A blight is upon me, and I bring desolation and sorrow to any one who shares my fortunes. Leave me. Go back to England. Follow your profession, and forget that you ever knew so unfortunate a being as Frank Anglesey."

"I will never do that. No, Frank," answered Wilfred, "your destiny and mine are irresistibly bound up together. I have been too long with you and have done too much for you to leave you now."

"You have indeed done much for me—more than one man has a right to expect from another, and for that reason I want to see you free and happy again. Go, Wilfred, and if the blessing of a poor fellow like myself is of any use to you take it with you."

"If you were happy, contented, prosperous, I might do so," said Marshall, "for then I should know that you had no longer any occasion for my services; but I will not quit your side while affairs are in their present state. You have need of me, Frank—more need now than you ever had."

"You are right; I have need of you," exclaimed Anglesey, after a momentary pause spent in reflection. "Since you have made your choice I will say no more of separation. You have behaved to me with more than brotherly affection. There is work to do, and you shall help me to do it."

"What work?" repeated Marshall, almost sadly. "Oh, if you would forego the pursuit of this phantom. Your love is an unholy one, and can only result in misery and disgrace, for Heaven cannot approve of the course that you have taken or the hopes that you cherish."

"You are mistaken," replied Captain Anglesey, calm yet firm. "Marigold and I were born for one another. She gave me her heart's love when her virgin affection was first budding into life. This man, Kimbolton, robbed me of the choicest flower that was ever planted in life's garden, and I am only taking back my own."

"This is sheer infatuation," answered Marshall.

"Whatever it is I feel it useless to struggle against it. I yield to my fate, that is all. Is it nothing by no fault of one's own to lose the only woman one ever can or could love? I tell you she shall yet be mine, and Kimbolton shall dearly pay for the ignominy to which he has subjected me."

"Think the matter over. You may talk differently when you are calmer. At present you are suffering from a strong sense of injustice. For goodness' sake come home."

"The atmosphere of these rooms is stifling. Give me your arm, Wilfred. I am not strong."

Marshall supported the captain from the assembly

rooms. The latter spoke truly when he said he was not strong, for he was deathly pale and trembled like a leaf. The scene he had gone through had thoroughly unnerved him. The cup of joy had only been presented to his lips; ere he could so much as sip its sweet contents it had been dashed rudely away.

His love for Marigold had become a madness or a monomania. Nothing that his friend could say had any effect upon him. In vain Marshall urged the misery attendant upon such love. Anglesey only became furious, and told him he was siding with his enemies.

He could not be made to see that the laws of Heaven and man were against such a union as he contemplated, and persisted in regarding Marigold as his own by every law, human and divine.

Perhaps his early love for her, his subsequent disappointment, and the dreadful suffering he had undergone for her sake may be pleaded in extenuation.

His mind was not in a healthy state, and he ought not to be judged by the standard which we apply to people who have not been subjected to the ordeal that he had passed through.

Marshall led him to the carriage which he had hoped would convey him to some distant spot where he loved, where they might live in seclusion and devote their existence one to the other.

It was a dream, and the awakening had been rude and cruel.

When they arrived at the house they occupied they were informed that a servant from Lady Kimbolton's hotel wished to speak to Captain Anglesey in private.

The unhappy man's face brightened on receiving this intelligence, and, asking Marshall to remain with him, as he could possibly have no secrets from him, he ordered the domestics to be shown in.

Teddy Rouse at once entered and said:

"I didn't have much trouble to find you, sir. The name of Coningsby seems pretty well known in these parts, though I think I remember you under another. No offence, I hope, sir," he added as a dangerous gleam appeared in Frank's eye.

"You have come from Lady Kimbolton," exclaimed he; "that alone would be sufficient to induce me to overlook any licence you might allow your tongue to run into. Have you a message or a letter for me?"

"It's a bit of a note, sir," replied Teddy, feeling in his pocket and producing the precious missive.

The captain snatched it out of his hand, and, breaking open the envelope, read it eagerly.

Though brief, its paragraphs breathed the most ardent affection, and she entreated him to follow and

save her from the life of misery and persecution she was compelled to lead, adding that Lord Kimbolton had expressed his intention of proceeding at once to Venice, for which city they might be expected to start by the first available train in the morning.

This letter refreshed Captain Anglesey's heart like the dew which falls on the parched grass in summer.

Marigold thought of him, loved him still, called upon him to save her, and told him whether she was going. This, in his mind, made his success simply a question of time.

He turned round and reverently placed his lips to the little piece of scented paper, which was made invaluable in his eyes because it had come from her he loved. Then he placed it next his heart, and resuming his former position, took a handful of gold coins from his pocket, and, without counting them, tossed them into Teddy's hat, saying :

" You are a trustworthy fellow, and there is something to reward you for your fidelity and trouble. I can see you are devoted to your mistress, and, as I will not trust myself to write a reply to the epistle you brought me, I will give you a verbal message."

" I'm my lord's man, sir," said Teddy, making a low bow in acknowledgment of the captain's reckless generosity. " But you needn't be afraid of my betraying a secret. You've paid me well, and thank you for your kindness, sir, though I may say——"

" Take some more," interrupted Anglesey, with a gesture of contempt as he flung another handful into his hat. " Take it; and I wish the time may never come when you despise the dross as much as I do. Have I bribed you high enough now, my man?"

" It isn't bribing I want, though I never say no to a good thing, sir," replied Teddy. " What I was going to say is that Miss Flora, my lady's maid, asked me to do this for her, and I'm a little bit taken with Flora, sir. She's a pretty girl, though she does lead me a life, and, being so taken, sir, you need not be afraid that I shall do anything that she doesn't like."

" Oh, I see," exclaimed Anglesey, with a faint smile. " You are fond of her ladyship's maid, and——"

" Fond, sir?" repeated Teddy. " Fond isn't the word; I'm over head and ears in love with her. I'm half drowned in love. It's a regular case with me, sir."

" I wish you all the success you can desire in that quarter," replied Captain Anglesey; " and I trust that Miss Flora will keep you devoted to her mistress. Go and tell her that I will follow her to the end of the world, and that I return her expressions of affection a thousand-fold. Take care that you deliver my message faithfully," he added, with his old look of fire. " We are all going to Venice, the city of daggers, and I can assure you I know how to resent an injury."

" Daggers!" said Teddy. " Oh, sir, don't talk of daggers. I'm a peaceable man, and have no idea of being daggered."

" There are men, my good fellow, who hold human life as cheap as water," continued the captain, " and you can buy a dagger for a mere song. But don't be alarmed, mine was an idle threat. You are good and true, and you need not fear my anger."

" I'll take your message to Flora, sir, and whisper it in her ear, then I'll forget it. My lord is a hard, stern man, but not over generous, so you needn't fear that I shall let the cat out of the bag. They do say, sir, that you loved my lady first, and that she, poor thing, is breaking her heart about you, and wouldn't have married if she hadn't thought you dead; and if that's the case it's a crying shame you should be parted. I wish you luck with all my heart."

" That will do," said Wilfred Marshall. " Make haste back to the hotel; and, look here—you can do an additional service—leave a letter at the post-office at Venice, telling us where you are staying."

" It shall be done, sir. Good-night, and thank you, gentlemen," answered Teddy.

He hastened back to the hotel, chinking the gold in his pocket, which nearly amounted to a year's wages, and aroused Flora, who was sitting up for him.

The lights had been turned out in the hall, and only a candle carried by the maid illuminated the spacious vestibule.

" Oh, it's you, Teddy," said Flora. " Well, what did he say? Did he give you a message or a letter?"

" A message, Flo," answered Teddy. " Stoop down; lower than that—lower still. I've got to whisper it, for fear the walls might hear it."

Flora bent down her head, and Teddy's lips came in contact with hers.

" What are you doing?" she cried. " That isn't my ear. Make haste, and say what you've got to say."

" It's so dark I can't see," replied Teddy. " Stoop down again. He says he'll follow her to the end of

the world, and so would I you. I'd go to—oh, I don't know where I wouldn't go. Siberia's a long way off, isn't it? Well, I'd go there after you, or to—"

" The Scilly Islands; that's where you'll go some of these days, Teddy," replied Flora, laughing. " But go on. What else did he say?"

" Say! You'll drive it all out of my head; it's clear gone—oh, no, it isn't; it's come back again now. He said—I've got it—he said his affection for her was ten times greater than hers for him; and that's just how I feel for you, Flo."

" Go along with your nonsense," said the pretty maid, tossing her head in a sort of manner which seemed to invite another kiss.

" I do indeed," continued Teddy. " It's a funny feeling; but I'm sure if there was a measure for love just as there is for everything else you'd find that I should weigh the scales down, and no mistake."

" Well, I'm going—good-night," said Flora, but she did not attempt to move nevertheless.

" Just one, Flo," he urged.

" One what, sir?" she replied, severely.

" You know; just one kiss—only a little one, Flo."

She turned her rosy, panting lips towards him, and he took advantage of the opportunity; a loud smack resounded through the hall, and the next moment Teddy was alone, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, while Flora tripped up gaily to her mistress's apartment to impart to her the intelligence for which she well knew she was so ardently waiting.

CHAPTER XIX.

Then lov'st another than but what to me is this? 'Tis nothing—nothing e'er can be; But yet thou lov'st—and—oh, I envy those Whoose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose; Who never feel the void—the wandering thought

That sighs o'er visions such as mine hath wrought.

PALE and statue chiselled out of the cold marble, Marigold awaited the coming of her maid, and a slight flush of pleasure overspread her worn features when she heard the message sent her by Captain Anglesey.

" The gentleman loves you, my lady," continued Flora, who was affected by her mistress's grief; " there can be no doubt of that. You will see him again, and that ought to comfort you. Rouse, who took the letter, will not betray you to my lord, because he knows I should never speak to him again if he offended me in such a way."

" It matters little whether those around me are true or false," answered Marigold, with a heavy sigh. " I shall soon be where the cares of this world cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; yet I should like to die in Frank's arms."

" Don't talk about dying, my lady. You'll live many happy years yet," said Flora, in a tone of encouragement.

Lady Kimbolton shook her head sadly.

" Undress me, child!" she exclaimed; " sleep is my only friend. When I close my eyes I forget my sorrow."

Flora set about her task, and the conversation ended.

Lord Kimbolton was as good as his word, for quite early the next morning the party started for Venice.

Neither Doctor Dawson nor Mrs. Henderson liked the sudden change, but his lordship's slightest wish was law to them; and, being as it were dependents on his bounty, they could not refuse to obey him.

Beautiful Venice, the bride of the sea, was not so gay as Spa. At that time the Venetians groaned under the severity of the Austrian rule, and the gaiety of this queen of cities had departed from it.

Lord Kimbolton hired one of the palatial residences built of polished marble which are so plentiful there, and every effort to please Marigold was made by her aunt, but without success. She had sunk into a state of settled melancholy, and the only magician who could dispel her gloom was Captain Anglesey, whom she did not see.

Her husband had her closely watched, and seemed to gloat over her misery with a lynx-like eye.

He talked unreservedly to Doctor Dawson after the scene in the Kursaal at Spa, and said:

" I know she does not love me, nor am I anxious now that she should do so. That's a dream of the past."

" Does your lordship go the right way to work to induce her wandering affection to return? Lady Kimbolton has a soft and tender heart," replied the doctor.

" I can never forgive her for daring to think of another!" exclaimed his lordship. " She has committed a fault, and she must pay the penalty."

" Do you know what that penalty will be, my lord?" asked the doctor, gravely.

" You would say death. Is it not so? Well, I am prepared for that event. I await its coming with impatience."

The doctor shuddered at the implacable hostility revealed in those words.

" Of course your lordship knows your own affairs best," he replied, submissively; " and it would be as useless as impertinent in me to protest against such an expectation, though a little kindness on your part might do good. Women are little cattle, as the Scotch say, and require peculiar treatment. They are incapable of reasoning in the sense in which we understand the word. Recollect what happened when Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, had the toothache. She——"

" Nothing you can say will induce me to forego my cherished vengeance," interrupted Lord Kimbolton. " She has offended and she must suffer until the grave blots out her offence."

" I cannot see what she has done to make you so implacable," persisted the doctor. " She met her old lover by accident and begged him to withdraw."

" By accident!" cried his lordship; " it was a pre-meditated interview. Was there anything accidental the other day at Spa when they met again and I found her hanging on the man's arm on the eve of sloping? No, no, doctor; she is a traitress. I never had her love, but by Heaven no one else shall. I tell you I would rather see her dead."

" You will soon have your wish, or else my medical knowledge goes for nothing," replied the doctor.

Lord Kimbolton put an end to the conversation by ordering his "gondola," which is a necessary of life in Venice.

The streets were almost all canals, as the city is built on piles driven into the sea, it is requisite to have boats, propelled by gondoliers, in order to go from one place to another.

Some weeks passed and Lord Kimbolton did not stir out so much. His appearance was careworn, and it was evident that some secret grief was disturbing him.

Doctor Dawson advised change of air, which he did not seem to object to.

" We will go on to Rome, doctor," he said. " I have a cause of terror in this city which I will reveal to you. You have remarked a change in me lately?"

" Unquestionably."

" For the last three weeks," continued his lordship, " my gondola has been followed by another, draped in black, and whenever it has passed me I have remarked a man wearing a mask who has made threatening signs at me."

" Strange," said the doctor; " are you sure this is not the result of fancy?"

" Oh, perfectly sure; the black mask follows me like a shadow, and I fear it portends some evil. It haunts me at night. I cannot sleep."

" Communicate with the police."

" To what end? A man has as much right to go about the city in a gondola draped with draped as I have to travel in one gaily adorned, and there is no law to prevent any one wearing a black mask that I am aware of."

" Do you go armed?" asked the doctor.

" Invariably; though if I were attacked suddenly in the evening I am afraid I should not be able to defend myself successfully. We must leave Venice. To-night I go to the theatre. I have promised a young Italian actress to attend her benefit. To-morrow we will go."

" It is time. Do you suspect any one of harbouring sinister intentions towards you?"

" I will confess that I have a suspicion," replied Lord Kimbolton.

" Some ardent lover of this young actress, perhaps, to whom you have been paying attention."

" No. I have seen Captain Anglesey in Venice. He was in the large square of St. Mark yesterday, and as our eyes met a gleam of gratified malice seemed to flash from his to mine."

" He has cause to hate you."

" And will have more before I have finished my battle with him," replied Kimbolton, savagely.

Preparations were accordingly made for a removal from Venice to Rome; but they were destined to be futile, owing to events that rapidly took place.

His lordship went to the theatre and witnessed a most brilliant performance. The young actress whose he honoured with his notice never sang better. He applauded loudly, and threw to her the most expensive and splendid bouquet that money could procure.

In the flowers was a valuable bracelet, which she extricated from its floral entanglement and placed on her wrist with a low bow and a sweet smile, amidst renewed plaudits from the audience.

It was long past midnight when the gondoliers returned to the palace.

They seemed much alarmed, and one of them was wounded.

Doctor Dawson went to meet them in the hall. The foremost of them said that about half way between the theatre and the palace a gondola draped with black, which they had often remarked before, ran alongside of them.

Two men wearing masks sprang on board and attacked Lord Kimbolton, who was rendered powerless by a blow on the head which made him insensible. His inanimate body was then thrown on board the other gondola.

They tried to prevent this, but were overpowered.

The dark-looking gondola was rapidly propelled by its oarsmen, and soon disappeared in the distance.

Doctor Dawson was stunned at this intelligence. He went at once to the police-bureau and gave intelligence of the outrage.

Returning to the palace, he roused Mrs. Henderson and Marigold. The former received the news with the same stupefaction that Doctor Dawson had himself exhibited, but Marigold evinced no sign of alarm or amazement.

A look of hope, if not of thankfulness, overspread her features, and she resembled one who has received a reprieve on the eve of execution.

The police exerted themselves to the utmost to discover the perpetrators of this daring attack, but were unable to do so.

Ten days passed and no tidings could be gleaned of Lord Kimbolton or the supposed assassin, when at last some boatmen picked up a body, dressed in his lordship's clothes and having on its person some articles of value belonging to him, but the face was so disfigured, either from blows or the attacks of fishes, that it was totally impossible to recognize the features.

It was generally supposed that his lordship had been barbarously murdered, and the body was accepted as his by Doctor Dawson, who caused it to be interred with great magnificence.

His lordship having no male heirs the title lapsed, and Marigold became the sole mistress of his great wealth and large landed estates.

From this date a marked improvement took place in her health.

Doctor Dawson had his suspicions as to the murderers of Lord Kimbolton, his mind irresistibly turning to Captain Anglesey and Wilfred Marshall; but as neither of them was to be found in Venice he could prove nothing and was obliged to preserve silence.

Marigold thanked the doctor for his services to her, but declared that as she felt her health improving she should not require his professional attendance any longer, and he returned to England.

Mrs. Henderson was still her niece's companion, and treated her with more respect and deference than she had ever done before.

Marigold dismissed all the servants except Teddy House and Flora, and expressed her desire to remain on the Continent for some time.

"Do as you please, my dear," said Mrs. Henderson; "this dreadfully sudden blow has altered the whole current of your life. You are now wealthy and independent. It is for you to do as you please. While your unfortunate husband lived of course your will was subordinate to his, and it was my duty to support his authority."

"You will never hear me say a word against Lord Kimbolton," replied Marigold; "whatever he made me suffer is best known to myself. It is my affair, and I shall choose to forget it, though I cannot make any secret of the fact that I feel an incubus has been taken from my heart. My health is much better. Kimbolton's tyranny, whether deserved or undeserved, was dragging me down to the grave. I was gradually sinking, and if I were to say that I regret his death I should be playing the part of a hypocrite and not speaking the truth."

"He was terribly stern and severe, my dear child," said Mrs. Henderson, "and my heart used to bleed for you. It is so dreadful when the husband and wife cease to love each other."

"I shall live now, aunt. I feel it—I know it. My heart is lighter, my head clearer," continued Marigold.

"You are young," said her aunt, "handsome, rich, and all the delights of the world are open to you. Whatever I can do to contribute to your pleasure rest assured I will do."

"Continue to be as you have always been, my kind friend," answered Marigold, kissing her.

They had removed from their palace to an hotel, which was more cheerful, and though Mrs. Henderson repeatedly urged her to quit Venice she refused to do so.

In remaining she had an object.

Captain Anglesey knew she was going to Venice, and had said that he would follow her to the end of the world.

She had an idea that he was even then near her, and she waited with impatience to see him.

CHAPTER XX.

Oh, happiness! our being's end and aim,
Good, pleasure, ease, content!—whate'er thy
n'me;
That something still which prompts th' eternal
sigh.

For which we bear to live, or dare to die. *Popo.*
Thus progress towards recovery that Marigold
made was as rapid as it was extraordinary.

She became once more the strong and healthy girl
that she used to be, which showed that her malady
was one rather of the mind than the body.

Lord Kimbolton's behaviour to her had been so
consistently cold and, if we may use the phrase, politely
brutal that it was impossible she could feel anything
but joy at her delivery from his thralldom, however
shocked she might be at his sudden and violent end.

They had lived apart, meeting almost as strangers,
ever since the fatal night when Captain Anglesey
intruded himself rashly and unexpectedly on her
presence.

Not one kind or loving word had passed since then
between them, and he had never lost an opportunity of
reminding her that his love had turned to bitter and
unyielding hatred.

This treatment was calculated to have a most distressing effect upon her, especially when it is remembered that she was not in reality to blame. She did not seek Captain Anglesey's society. His note had been destroyed unread. But Lord Kimbolton would not listen to any explanation. He studiously ignored the master in public, and chose to treat the captain as a thief, while in private he behaved to his unfortunate wife as if she had really been guilty of that crime which a husband can never pardon or forget.

In addition to this Anglesey had been her early and favoured lover. His punishment was in reality hers, and her husband being dead she longed to see him and rejoice in her recovered freedom.

No long time elapsed before her wishes were gratified, for about three months after the attack upon Lord Kimbolton and the discovery of his body she received a gilt-edged card bearing the name:

"Captain Francis Anglesey."

How her heart throbbed at that moment with tender emotions.

Her whole soul seemed to come into her face and light it up as if with a halo.

Mrs. Henderson was not at home.

Marigold was alone, there was no eye to look upon that meeting between the lovers, and a delicious feeling of inexpressible ecstasy took possession of the once again beautiful and radiant Marigold.

Yet there was a cloud upon the horizon of her happiness.

Doctor Dawson had intimated his suspicions that Captain Anglesey was concerned in the attack upon Lord Kimbolton. The latter was his friend, and he declared that he would hunt him down if he possibly could do so.

If Anglesey had really been guilty of the murder of her husband Marigold felt that he could never be really dear to her.

She would not accept happiness with him at such a price.

When he entered the room where she was awaiting his coming she remarked that he too was free from the careworn look which he had carried with him from the prison.

His handsome face beamed with smiles and his step was springy and elastic.

Advancing towards her, he clasped her unresisting form in his arms and imprinted a kiss upon her lips.

"Oh, Marigold, darling, dearest Marigold," he exclaimed as he strained her to his breast and rained a shower of kisses upon her passive lips, "this hour is worth a life-time. I have looked forward to this longed for it till my heart fainted beneath the cruel delay."

Marigold gently disengaged herself from his arms and motioned him to a seat.

"Frank," she said, "you know my deep affection for you. It burned brightly even while I was compelled to suppress and deny its existence even to myself, but I must, without any delay, ask you one question you would put to me."

"It related to my husband, who—"

"I knew it," replied Captain Anglesey. "The report is that he was cruelly murdered as he was returning to his palace in a gondola, after spending a few hours behind the scenes of the theatre with an actress of whose charms he was enamoured."

"Of that I know nothing," said Marigold, flushing slightly.

"Nevertheless it is a fact of which you ought to be advised, because it is, or rather was, part and parcel of the infamous and atrocious system of persecution to which he subjected you."

"Give me a reply," she said, waiting for his answer with tremulous impatience.

"You want to know if I have murdered, or caused to be murdered, Lord Kimbolton?"

"Yes."

"And I answer unhesitatingly, No," replied Captain Anglesey. "You have my word of honour, Marigold, that I have not murdered him, and that my hand is free from the slightest stain of his blood. Neither have I hired or caused others to do what I would shrink from myself."

"You swear this?"

"On my honour. Wilfred Marshall, who is incapable of uttering a falsehood, will tell you that he can account for every half-hour of my time since our meeting in the Kursaal at Spa."

"I believe you, Frank, dearest," she murmured. "This denial of a dreadful suspicion which had crossed my mind removes the only remaining barrier between us. I thought you might have been urged by a just sense of revenge to remove Lord Kimbolton from your path and to wish him dead for my sake."

"He was hurrying you to the grave, and he gloried in his foul and wicked work," said Frank, with a momentary gleam of anger. "But it pleased Providence to put him down first, and now—"

"And now, Frank, my own, my darling, my loved one," replied Marigold, again throwing herself into his arms, "the affection of years shall be requited, I—I am not going to die; I am going to live, and for you, Frank; all—all for you. Oh, it is too much happiness. I can scarcely bring myself to believe in its reality."

"Marigold," said Captain Anglesey, "you vowed that you would be mine years ago, and the bride of no other; you did not keep your word."

"It is not too late to fulfil it," she replied. "I thought you dead, and the solicitations of my aunt induced me to accept Lord Kimbolton's offer. I was poor and dependent."

"I know it. It is not too late to make amends for the lamentable result of Mrs. Henderson's ambition, I do not blame her. She acted for your welfare."

"Oh, dear, dear Frank, do not reproach me," she exclaimed, "I cannot bear it. I am yours, wholly, as I have been in heart and soul all along."

"I do not wish to coerce you, Marigold," he answered. "Think well over your position. You are young, rich, and beautiful. You have a title. It is for you to choose a husband from all the world if you like to marry again."

"I have thought, dear Frank," she exclaimed, "and I am yours. I repeat it. Without you I cannot live."

"So be it, Marigold," exclaimed Captain Anglesey. "You have deliberately made your choice, and I will not say another word. You know how dearly I love you, how fondly I have cherished your memory through all my sufferings, which were incurred for your sweet sake, though brought about by my own imprudence. We were born for one another. It would be madness to throw aside the happiness that fate has placed at last in our hands."

This conversation was long and delightful. They forgot all that they had undergone in the delicious intercommunion of soul which they indulged in.

When Captain Anglesey took leave of Lady Kimbolton they were engaged as they had been years before and she had agreed to marry him in three months.

"The interval between my husband's death and our union will be short," she exclaimed. "But I do not care for the censure of the world. I shall not revisit England unless you wish it; we will live abroad."

"That is certainly my desire," answered the captain, "and, anticipating such a resolution on your part, I have bought a castle, which is situated in a beautiful but lonely district in the vicinity of Venice, where we can live without the interruption of friends or the pomp of state and be all in all to each other. It is an old baronial residence, perched on a rock, with ramparts and a drawbridge. You could not have met with anything more perfectly feudal a thousand years ago."

"How I shall love it," said Marigold, with rapture. "But as your wife, dear Frank, I could be happy in a cottage."

"I know it, darling. Yet you will be pleased with the castellated mansion, its quaintly carved old oak furniture and its surroundings. We can take walks and drives in the neighbourhood, and there are a variety of birds and animals to shoot and hunt in the domain belonging to the chateau."

"What is it called?"

"The Eagle's Nest."

"That is charmingly romantic. In the Eagle's Nest we will live for one another, forget the past and defy the world," exclaimed Marigold. "Lady Kimbolton shall be forgotten in Mrs. Anglesey, and I am yours for ever. But you must always be kind to me,

Frank ; a frown from you would kill me, and a harsh word even in my wayward moments would—" "Do not alarm yourself, dearest," interrupted Captain Anglesey. "I would rather cut my tongue out than allow it to say anything you might consider unkind even under the most severe provocation, which I am sure you will never give me."

When Captain Anglesey left her Marigold was radiant with smiles. Mrs. Henderson on her return did not fail to remark the change which had taken place in her.

"Oh ! aunt," she cried. "I have seen him. I have promised to be his wife, and now I know what happiness is."

"Seen whom, my dear?" asked Mrs. Henderson. "Do you mean Captain Anglesey?"

"Yes. He has been here. He has only just left."

"And you have promised to be his wife? When?"

"In a few weeks."

"My dear child, this is sudden. It is more than that—it is almost indecent. Your husband has not been dead long," said Mrs. Henderson, who always had a strong regard for the proprieties of life.

"What will people say?"

"I care little what anybody says," replied Marigold. "I am bold, and brave, and happy now, aunt. I am not the pale, shrinking, trembling thing I was when Kimbolton was alive. Frank and I are going to live in an old feudal castle in Venetia, not far from here, and our existence will be one long dream of unexhausted joy."

Mrs. Henderson sank into a chair. This communication took her by surprise.

"Dear me. How strangely things come about!" she exclaimed ; "who on earth would have thought of this a year ago? But—"

She hesitated.

"What, dear aunt?" asked Marigold. "Do not for goodness' sake try to make me miserable just at the moment when I am striving to live again as it were and enjoy life."

"I was thinking of something," replied Mrs. Henderson.

"Of what?"

"Perhaps I had better not tell you."

"Oh, do. You know I never could guess riddles, and to have a secret kept from me was always a great grief. Please tell me."

"Well, if you press me I will," answered Mrs. Henderson, like a bird of ill omen. "Suppose Lord Kimbolton is not dead after all?"

"Not dead?"

"We had no positive proof of his death," replied Mrs. Henderson.

"Not dead?" repeated Marigold, in a monotone.

"Not dead? Oh! It is impossible. You are talking nonsense. He is dead and buried."

"Of course, it is only an idea. Forgive me if it has pained you, and—"

"Say no more about it, aunt dear. You shall come and live with us in our old-fashioned chateau, but you must not frighten me any more with your foolish fancies. Not dead! Oh, but you did alarm me for the moment. No, no, people do not come back from the grave."

Mrs. Henderson said no more, and in a few moments Marigold recovered her serenity and walked in the hall of the hotel, where she met a few friends whom she had made herself acquainted with during her stay.

They talked gaily, but in spite of her self-possession Mrs. Henderson's words had made an impression upon her, and she caught herself several times saying, half aloud, "Not dead, not dead!"

"How stupid I am," she muttered, in a tone of annoyance.

The shadow had fallen upon her, however, and she could not throw it off.

(To be continued.)

A NEW Chinese newspaper has been started in Shanghai, and for the present comes out on alternate days.

POLO.—The mystery is unveiled. Everybody knows now what Polo is, and nothing could be more innocent or satisfactory. Polo is simply a game at ball played on horseback—it is, in fact, equestrian hockey ; and a number of officers of the Blues and 9th Lancers have recently played it in Windsor Park in the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales and a distinguished company. Polo may be considered to be fairly launched as a fashionable sport under the most fashionable auspices, and it remains to be seen whether it will succeed in establishing itself as a familiar and popular amusement. The ordinary hockey is a vulgar cross between cricket and football ; but of course it is lifted out of the category of common games when played on horseback. There are six champions on each side, attired in a uniform devised for the occasion—short cords, riding gaiters, jerseys, and caps. The two parties are dis-

tinguished by different colours. The combatants are armed with long hockeys clubs with straight hooks, and are mounted on stout, serviceable ponies, whose forelegs are swathed in bandages, after the fashion of champion cricketers, to save them from rude blows. The object of the game, as of hockeys and football, is to keep the ball away from your opponents' base and to drive it towards your own ; and it may easily be imagined that the encounter is full of excitement for the spectators as well as for those who take part in it. The charges of horsemen after the ball—now rushing together in a dense cluster, now breaking loose, wheeling, and scattering—the rattle of sticks and plunging of ponies, the racing, chasing, and collisions, the varying chances and stirring incidents of the sport—give it a highly picturesque and animated character. It is certainly excellent sport, but there are several reasons why it must necessarily be confined to a limited circle. It can be played properly only by expert horsemen, with horses or ponies more or less trained to their work ; and it may not always be easy to find a piece of ground suitable for the exercise. One of the combatants the other day had his head broken, and it was observed that before the game was over several of the ponies began to limp. A rider who would willingly run the risk of a few hard knocks for himself might not be able to afford the luxury of having a good pony lamed or marked.

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

CHAPTER IX.

HONOR GLINT, as we shall continue to call our young heroine, notwithstanding the fact that she was now legally entitled to another name, was in no state of mind to return immediately to the Red House, and to encounter the prying eyes of Mrs. Glint and Miss Milner.

She longed to creep into some solitude and hide herself from every one. Her brain was in a tumult, her soul seemed on fire.

She hurried on and on, eager to place yet greater distance between herself and the chapel in which her ill-considered marriage to Darrel Moer had taken place, yet not seeing any one whom she met, nor knowing whither she was going.

Her faithful maid hurried after her, half running to keep up with her, and terrified and apprehensive, frequently casting back glances over her shoulder, as if fearing pursuit.

"Oh, Miss Honor," she pleaded, as the steps of her young mistress flagged at last, and the slender figure began to droop wearily, "dear Miss Honor! Let me call a cab. Let me take you home."

Honor half turned her head.

She had drawn her tiny dotted net veil over her face, but Lucky could see that her young lady's face was white as death, and that her black eyes were burning like twin fires.

"I—I cannot go home yet, Lucky," said Honor, in a faint, gasping voice. "I must go in somewhere and rest. I—I am tired!"

They were now in a wider and more fashionable street, at some distance from the chapel.

A few steps from them as Honor thus came to a half-halt was a pastry-cook's shop, with a little parlour in the rear fitted up with tables for the use of customers. Here tea and coffee and light refreshments were served to weary lady shoppers, and Honor had visited the place several times in company with Mrs. Glint and Miss Milner.

Her glance caught the little gilt sign now, and she moved toward it and entered the shop, her maid closely following.

The shop was occupied at the moment by two or three customers, but Honor passed into the little rear parlour, which was untenanted at the moment of her appearance, and sat down at a small table in the farthest corner by a window which was fitted with panes of ground glass. The maid, in compliance with Honor's request, sat down at the same table.

A shop-girl came in and desired to know to what the lady would be served. Lucky, with a glance at her pallid young mistress, ordered coffee for two.

It was brought ; the shop-girl returned to her counter, closing the door, and Honor and her attendant were left to themselves in the little dim, chilly parlour.

Lucky pushed the cup of hot coffee toward Miss Glint, entreating her to drink, but Honor laid her face upon the table, and a silence like that which thralls the dead fell upon her. The maid was awed and frightened. She fidgeted in her seat, and presently began to cry softly.

"Oh, Miss Honor," she whispered, her alarm increasing with every moment, "speak to me. I am afraid this will kill you. How you loved Mr. Moer!"

Honor half raised her head now and shook it slowly, as she said, in a piteous voice :

"No, Lucky, I did not love him, but I trusted him, believed in him, and—and I liked him. But I did not love him."

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed the maid. "He is a bold, bad man, Miss Honor. How could he curse the bride he had just led from the altar? He finds you in his way now, Miss Honor, and he wants to marry this great Yorkshire heiress. Do you believe, Miss Honor," and the girl's voice sank to a scared whisper, "do you believe he will kill you?"

"People in Mr. Moer's rank in life do not kill those whom they hate," answered Honor, wearily, and with terrible bitterness, "else I think he might kill me. He is quite capable of so doing, I believe, only he might be restrained by cowardice. This has been a bad morning's work, Lucky, and I feel in my soul that this marriage is but the gateway through which I have entered upon an endless trouble."

"What shall you do, Miss Honor?" asked the maid, hesitatingly and tremblingly. "You are legally Mr. Moer's wife. If you would permit me to offer you a suggestion I would say that it might be well for you to go directly to Lord Waldemar and tell him your story, and ask him to see that justice is done to you."

"What can Lord Waldemar do for me?" demanded Honor, in a low, suppressed voice. "Can he give me back my freedom that I cast from me this morning for this man's bonds? Can he give me back my light heart—my betrayed trust—my gay hopefulness? Ah, no, no! He would force me to live with his nephew, perhaps; and I would rather die than be a wife to Darrel Moer! He would compel Darrel to support me, and I would perish with hunger before I would accept a penny from Darrel Moer! I want nothing of Lord Waldemar or his nephew. Oh, if this cruel, hateful marriage could be undone! If I were only back where I was this morning!"

"If the marriage is not acknowledged, if you never live with Mr. Moer, nor bear his name, nor accept his money, then are you legally his wife?" asked the maid.

"Yes," said Honor, with a pitiful moan. "If I never set eyes again on Darrel Moer I am yet his wife. Oh, Heaven!"

The maid trembled before the wildness in the dusky, tearless eyes, and in the lovely white face, but she said :

"Miss Honor, the clergyman leaves to-morrow upon a mission to Africa. The old clerk is deaf, and looks not long for this world. If Mr. Moer wanted to destroy all evidence of the marriage he can easily do so. If he should destroy all evidence would you still be his wife?"

"Ah, yes, Lucky. The destruction of all evidence cannot affect the validity of the marriage. The fact of the marriage remains the same, although all proof of it be gone. Those words ring still in my ears: 'Whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder.' The Omnipotent heard our vows, Lucky, and the marriage is registered in Heaven."

A perplexed expression upon Lucky's face gave place to one of shrewdness.

"If that's the case," she said, "you are leaving everything in Mr. Moer's hands, Miss Honor—your good name and all. You can't marry any one else, because you are already married. How will you prove to Captain Glint that you have been married at all? Suppose the marriage register you signed to-day should be burnt up or lost, where would you be?"

"It would be terrible to be married and not be able to prove it—to live under a shadow always, and to have people talk scandal about you, and avoid you as something unclean. Dear Miss Honor, you must have some proof of the marriage in your own hands, as well as upon the register book. May I leave you for a few minutes, Miss Honor? I am your true friend, and I'll never desert you while I live. You can always trust your poor Lucky. Will you let me go now for a little while, and wait for me here until I come back?"

Honor assented, and her maid arose and departed. She paused in the shop to tell the attendant that her young mistress was tired and faint, and would await her return from an errand, and she begged that she might not be disturbed or intruded upon. Then she hurried out, found a cab, and hastened towards the chapel she had so recently quitted with her mistress.

On her way she encountered Darrel Moer alone in a cab, but he was too much absorbed in watching the pedestrians on the pavements to notice the occupant of the passing cab.

He had sought Honor in the streets nearest the chapel, but, not finding her, he had concluded that she had taken her way in the direction of the Red House. He was on his way thither at the present moment in pursuit of her.

It was past twelve when Lucky Banner drove up to the chapel door and hastily alighted. The door was yet open, and the maid entered the dim little edifice and hurried up the aisle.

The clergyman, the clerk and the pew opener

were still in the chapel, and so also was Bing, Darrel Moer's valet. He had found no opportunity to abstract the leaf of the marriage register, although he had diligently sought it. The clerk had kept vigilant watch over the important volume, and had himself consigned it to the rickety safe, putting the key in his own pocket.

Bing had also had no opportunity as yet to conceal himself in the church, and at the moment of Lucky's entrance there was a baffled expression upon his face that betokened his inward annoyance.

The clergyman had laid aside his canonicals, and was now ready to depart. He turned a glance of surprise upon Lucky as she approached him, recognizing her as one of the witnesses of the first of the three marriages he had solemnized that morning. As she had an evident intention of speaking to him he waited to hear her communication.

"If you please, sir," said Lucky, her anxieties and perturbations giving place to a certain awe of the austere-faced clergyman, "my young lady forgot to ask for her marriage lines, and I have come back for them. You are going to Africa, sir, and start to-morrow, and the marriage register might get burnt up, or lost, or something, and so, if you please, sir, my young lady would like a certificate of her marriage."

The clergyman smiled as he replied: "It is not very probable that the chapel books will be burnt up or lost, my good girl, but your young lady shall have her 'marriage lines' all the same, if she desires them. All who were present as witnesses to the marriage, be good enough to follow me to the vestry."

He led the way, the clerk, the pew opener, Lucky, and even Bing, following.

The clergyman produced some printed forms from his desk and proceeded to fill them out from the entry in the register, which the clerk produced for the purpose, carefully locking the book again in the safe and restoring the key to his person. The clergyman then read aloud the certificate of marriage and signed it. The clerk, the pew opener, and Lucky Banner appended their names as witnesses. The clergyman called upon Bing to sign his name also in the list of witnesses, and the valet, not being able to refuse, complied with the command.

Thrusting the important paper—whose very existence was to be a source of peril to Honor Glint—into her bosom, Lucky expressed her fervent thanks and departed swiftly, entering her cab at the chapel door, and returning to her young mistress.

The clergyman, the clerk and the pew opener all emerged into the street, and Bing was forced to accompany them, his design unaccomplished. The chapel door was securely locked, and Bing walked away, sulky and baffled, to communicate with his master.

Lucky Banner found her young lady still seated at the little table in the dim little back parlour of the pastry-cook's shop, alone, and with an indescribable look of desolation on her pale young face. Lucky held out to her the marriage certificate in silence.

Honor took it, opened it, and as she comprehended its purport an expression of loathing curled her lips.

"The time may come when I shall be glad to have this bit of paper, Lucky," she said, bitterly; "but just now it is hateful in my sight. I will keep it as a future guard and defence from evil tongues."

She secured the paper on her person, and arose, adding:

"I cannot alter my fate, Lucky, and must accept it as it is. I must bear the trouble I have brought upon myself as best I can. I have schooled myself to bravery and to calmness, and am now ready to go home."

"One word first, Miss Honor," said the girl, trembling. "Are you going back to Red House as Mrs. Darrel Moer?"

Honor's black eyes flashed with a sudden anger at the very name which now legally belonged to her.

"I shall never bear that name, Lucky," she exclaimed, in a contemptuous voice; "never—never! I am Honor Glint still to the world. Though I am wedded I will never be a wife; I will never be known by his name. Come, Lucky, let us go home."

The maid settled the small account, and followed her young mistress out to the cab, from which Lucky had so recently alighted, and had ordered its driver to wait. They entered, and were driven to the Red House.

Leaving Lucky to dismiss the cab, Honor walked slowly up the lawn, and passed by the open house door into the hall.

Mrs. Glint had evidently discovered her absence, and been lying in wait for her, for she came out of the dining-room, the door of which was exactly opposite that of the drawing-room, just as Honor began wearily to mount the stairs.

Mrs. Glint's face was flushed; the gay ribbons of her black lace head dress flying; and her face wore an expression of mingled suspicion and curiosity.

"You are out early, Honor," she exclaimed. "And I see that you have been at the extravagance of a cab. Of course you have been looking out for a situation as a governess, but I should think you would prefer to go somewhere where you were not known—to Manchester, for instance, or to Liverpool, or better still to London. Every one in Bolton knows Captain Glint, and every one who knows you believes you to be the captain's own daughter. You might have some regard for me and poor Clarette. We do not want to be disgraced by your teaching in the same town with us."

"I shall never teach in Bolton, madam."

"I am glad to hear that," said Mrs. Glint, immensely relieved. "But where have you been dressed in such style too?"

Honor's face whitened perceptibly, white as it already was, and Mrs. Glint's sharp eyes detected the increase of pallor.

"You will excuse me, madam; I cannot tell you," the young girl said, quietly.

"What! You cannot tell me where you have been this morning? I am amazed. You have some secret from me. I am your guardian and stand to you in the place of a mother. I command you to tell me the cause of your absence from my house this morning."

"Again I decline to tell you, madam. You have withdrawn your care and guardianship from me, have dismissed me coolly, as if I had been some forward servant, from the house I have regarded as my home all my life, and in which I have been always treated as a beloved and honoured daughter; and in so dismissing and casting me off you have of course no longer a claim upon my confidence."

A look of open and undisguised enmity towards Honor disfigured the face of Mrs. Glint.

"You are very high and mighty, miss," she exclaimed. "Understand that to-morrow you leave this house for good. I won't stand your impudence after to-night."

Honor bowed gracefully, and resumed her weary ascent of the stairs. At the sixth step she was halted again by Mrs. Glint, who cried out:

"You've had a call during your mysterious absence, miss. Mr. Darrel Moer came tearing up to the Red House half an hour ago in a cab, and the horse belonging to it was dripping with foam. Mr. Moer asked for you, and seemed upset when he heard you were not at home. He looked quite ill, but said he would call again. If you play your cards well you may get him to take compassion on you and marry you."

A spasm of pain convulsed Honor's features. Unable to bear more, she sped up the stairs to her own room. A little later her maid joined her there.

"I couldn't come up before, miss," said Lucky, apologetically. "Mrs. Glint stopped me in the hall, and asked me where you had been this morning, and when I refused to tell her she gave me warning to leave the house to-morrow morning."

"It is as well," said Honor, drearily. "We will go together, Lucky."

The young lady had already removed her wrappings and her dainty walking-suit, and had thrown around her a white cashmere dressing-gown. She was lying upon her luxurious blue satin couch at the moment of Lucky's appearance, her pale cheek and golden kinks of hair pressed close against the pale blue satin cushion.

"Where are we to go, Miss Honor?" inquired Lucky, after a pause. "Am I to stay with you?"

"If you wish to," replied Honor. "I may not be able to pay you as papa has done, Lucky. I am no longer Miss Glint of the Red House. I am turned out to earn my own support, and I do not wish, with this new grief upon me, to see poor papa again at present. I should only make him trouble. He would seek out Mr. Moer, and there would be a fight, and papa might get killed or hurt, and there would be a scandal. No, no; I cannot even wait somewhere for papa's return. I must provide for myself.

I feel very forlorn and desolate, Lucky, but if you choose to cling to me I will divide my last penny and my last crust with you. But it is my duty to tell you that you can easily get a good place and regular wages."

"I will never leave you, Miss Honor," ejaculated the maid, her eyes filling. "You are the best friend I have in the world, and I would rather starve with you than to be maid of honour to the Queen!"

This decision was final, and Honor no longer sought to combat it.

"Leave me to myself a little while, Lucky," she said, softly. "I want to think. Don't go out of the room though."

Lucky sat down in the recess of the oriel window with her sewing.

Honor, lying at full length upon her couch, en-

deavoured to face the realities of her position, and to frame her plans for her future.

An hour thus passed.

The housemaid then came up with the announcement that Mr. Darrel Moer had again called, and was desirous of seeing Miss Glint. Honor dismissed the servant, and went to her little portable desk and wrote a brief note, of which the following is a transcript:

"Miss Glint declines to see Mr. Darrel Moer now, or at any future time. She begs Mr. Moer to consider the acquaintance terminated. While regretting with all her heart that it is not in her power to return to Mr. Moer his absolute freedom, she begs to say that she will never be an encumbrance to him in any manner. She declines his name, his assistance, and will be careful never to betray to the world the unfortunate tie which exists between them, unless compelled to do so in self-defence."

This missive was hastily sealed, and Honor sent it down to Darrel Moer by the hand of her own trustworthy maid.

Mr. Moer was pacing the drawing-room impatiently, his eyes fixed upon the door, unheeding the questions of Mrs. Glint, who was convinced that some mystery had arisen between him and Honor, and was all eagerness to probe it, when Lucky came in.

He snatched the note from her hand and read it hastily. Then, a dark flush overspreading his Italian-looking face, he laid the note on the fire and watched it burn to ashes.

"Tell Miss Glint," he said, with a look in his sinister eyes that made Lucky shiver, "that it would have been better for her had she seen me. Stay, girl, I will send her a written answer."

He drew out his note-book and scrawled upon a leaf of it these words, full of dark and deadly menace:

"What happened this morning is to remain a secret. Breathe it to a human soul at your peril."

He gave this message into Lucky's own hand, and watched her from the room, preventing Mrs. Glint from following and intercepting it.

"You will be kind enough to explain this mystery going on in my own house, Mr. Moer," said Mrs. Glint, angrily. "What did that girl write to you? And what did you write to her? I demand an answer."

Darrel Moer's lips curled haughtily as he replied, coolly:

"I am afraid, my good soul, that you will have to languish in ignorance. Permit me to wish you a good-morning!"

He bowed and withdrew. Mrs. Glint, conceiving herself grossly insulted, gave a scream that brought her amiable daughter and her housemaid to her assistance, and to these sympathizing listeners she proceeded to recount the insult she had received, and to impart to them her suspicions that Miss Glint was involved in some terrible mystery, and "she dared no longer expose her innocent Clarette to the contamination of association with a girl who was Heaven knows who, and would turn out Heaven only know what!"

Mr. Darrel Moer went down the lawn in no very pleasant frame of mind. His cab was at the gate, and at the very door of the cab was his man Bing, evidently awaiting him. He had not seen the fellow since leaving him at the chapel, and his dark face brightened a little as Bing hastened to open the gate for him.

"Have you got the leaf out of that register?" demanded Moer, in an undertone.

"No, sir. It was impossible," answered Bing. "The clerk did not once lose sight of it. I couldn't hide in the church, sir—"

"Get me the leaf, if you have to lurk about Bolton week in order to obtain it," interposed Moer, fiercely. "The record in that register of this morning's madness must be in my hands! You hear, Bing? Break into the church by night, if that's necessary. You've done worse things!"

"Yes, sir; but—"

"I leave for Yorkshire by the first train. My whole future depends upon destroying the evidence of this morning's mad folly. I'll double the reward I offered you. Follow me to Floyd Manor when you can place the stolen leaf in my hands."

"But, Mr. Moer—"

"I won't hear any objections. You can do it, and you must do it. My life, and your future, depend upon getting possession of that simple leaf."

With a wave of his hand Darrel Moer sprang into his cab and drove to Lynshire Place to prepare for his journey.

Bing looked after his master with a perplexed face, muttering:

"He wouldn't let me tell him about that marriage certificate that girl got, and perhaps it's just as well he didn't. I can make something out of that by-and-bye. I'll earn my twenty guineas first. He's an odd one is Mr. Barrel Moer, and even I can't fully understand him. He was raving mad this morning

after Miss Glint. He would throw himself away upon a sea-captain's daughter, and yet at the very altar he wants to get loosed from her. What news did Mr. Carrington bring him that changed him so suddenly? What new villainy is he up to? He's that tickle I never expected to see him married to any woman, and here he is tied and wanting to break loose before he leaves the chapel! I wouldn't be in that young woman's boots for a fortune! He means mischief. I know Mr. Darrel Moer."

CHAPTER X.

We will now, after our long but necessary digression, return to Floyd Manor and its inmates.

Upon the evening of Miss Floyd's arrival—the evening before the hasty and ill-starred marriage of Darrel Moer and Honor Glint, it will be remembered—after writing the letter to Moer at Lord Waldemar's command, announcing the advent at the manor of the heiress, his lordship's business manager, Grimrod, took an early leave and departed.

But he did not immediately withdraw from the house.

He found the great central hall of the dwelling—which was one of those grand baronial halls such as are still to be found in various ancient houses in England, and large enough to quarter half a regiment without inconvenience—untenanted for the moment.

The arrival and installation of Lord Waldemar's acknowledged grand-daughter and successor had created quite a stir throughout the household, and the hall porter had slipped from his post and descended to the servants' hall intent upon gossip.

Taking advantage of this circumstance, Grimrod glided up the wide staircase, upon which six ladies in modern costume might walk abreast, and hurried along the upper hall to the door of Miss Floyd's private parlour.

Here he knocked softly for admittance.

Mrs. Watchley, the portly sandy-haired attendant of Miss Floyd, came to the door with her gold eyeglasses astride her beak-like nose, and looked out upon him.

"Ah, is it you, Mr. Grimrod?" she asked, in a low and guarded voice. "I expected you. Come in."

"Is—is Miss Floyd within?"

"No, she is three rooms distant, with the doors all closed between—closed, locked, and double-bolted," said Mrs. Watchley, somewhat grimly. "She has a fit of the sulks. You need not fear to enter. Miss Floyd will not show herself again tonight."

Grimrod looked about him quickly and shot himself into the rose parlour of the heiress, his quick movement not capable of being described by any other term.

When inside the chamber he turned the key in the lock, saying:

"What's the matter with the future Baroness Waldemar? Why is she in the sulks?"

Mrs. Watchley shrugged her fat shoulders as she replied:

"It's her way. When you get to know the young lady better you will learn that she has the most singular fits of sullenness without cause, and that she is one of the most obstinate of human creatures. Just now she thinks she has a cause. She is angry that Lord Waldemar should have retained me as a sort of companion to her and chaperone over her. She has just informed me that I was only a servant hired to nurse her by the late Mrs. Floyd, and that she will not be chaperoned by a hired servant. She declares that I shall not be her companion. She informed me that her 'Waldemar pride' revolted at intimate association with a woman who had been her hired nurse."

"She must be heartless."

"Heartless! She is heartless—heartless as a fish. I have watched over that girl all my life. I have known no joy apart from her. It has been my constant anxiety to train her for the position in which she is now installed, and she knows this. Yet in the very hour of her grandeur she coolly turns from the faithful heart that loved her despite all her faults, and stabs me to the soul. She does not want to be reminded by my presence that she has not always lived at the manor and been waited upon by a retinue of servants."

"All these things will right themselves in due time," said Grimrod. "The girl is guilty to-night from her sudden elevation. The discovery that she is the grand-daughter of a baron and will be herself a baroness some day has turned her head. Sit down. I came up to speak to you upon another subject."

Mrs. Watchley obeyed, sinking into the nearest seat.

Grimrod leaned one hand lightly upon the centre table, and looked down upon her. His attenuated, tall figure seemed even taller than usual; and, with his close-fitting black garments, his long, thin legs seeming too long in proportion to the upper portion of his figure, and his thin, sharp, and evil face, he looked

more than ever like the German pictures of Mephistopheles.

"I suppose," said Grimrod, his wafer-like lips growing thinner as they widened in a strange, sneering smile, and his keen eyes fixed upon the lady in a piercing gaze that seemed as though it would bore his anger-like way to her very soul, "that you know what manner of man is Lord Waldemar?"

"Yes, I have heard."

"He is proud as Lucifer, cynical, distrustful, full of bitterness and hatred since the hour his son deserted him for the daughter of his enemy. He is hot tempered, wicked, and passionate—full of sneers and impatience."

"You have told me all this before."

"It will bear telling again," said Grimrod, his face as impulsive as if carved from wood. "You must learn it by heart. He is more than I have described. Under the frost and snows of all his pride and cynicism he has actually a heart that longs for love! He yearns for affection, although he would not own it. It seems as if he had a heart of stone. In reality he is as capable of tenderness as a woman. Let this girl try to win his love. Let her cling to him with caresses. Let her run to meet him—sit at his feet—make much of him—and he will grow to idolize her so that he will not be able to lose her out of his sight."

Mrs. Watchley arched her brows after the manner of a Frenchwoman.

"You don't know Hilda," she said. "It would be a hard task for her to fawn upon his lordship in that manner, for she hasn't a grain of real tenderness in her nature, and her feigning would show its real character."

"But I tell you she must do it," said Grimrod, coolly. "You must teach her all these little arts, and teach her to fawn skilfully, because his lordship is as keen as steel. He idolized his only son, but that son disobeyed and mocked him by taking to wife the daughter of his lordship's enemy, and he banished him and suffered him to die abroad in poverty and despair. He never forgives nor forgets. He will suspect his grand-daughter to be artful and treacherous, and will avoid her at first; but, if she works aright, she can win his love. But even when she has won it let her beware of offending him. If she should venture to love a man he does not approve, or if she marry against his will, he will become her relentless enemy."

Mrs. Watchley dropped her face, but Grimrod saw that her gold eye-glasses upon the bridge of her nose suddenly quivered, as if from some quick contraction of the muscles under them.

"I will inform Hilda of your warning," she said, briefly.

"I noticed, when his lordship offered some such hint to-night, Miss Floyd betrayed agitation," said Grimrod, calmly. "Why was that?"

"How can I know? Probably he frightened her."

"But why should such a threat frighten her?" persisted the manager, coldly. "Has Miss Floyd ever had a lover?"

Mrs. Watchley changed colour.

"I daresay she has," she answered. "Hilda is a pretty girl, and her vanity is something monstrous, like her obstinacy. Of course she attracted attention at Innsbruck, and had lovers; but she is not betrothed to any one, and has no entanglement of any description. As she has no heart she cannot grove for any one she has known and has left behind. She is heart-whole, you may rest assured of that."

Grimrod was not more than half satisfied.

"Every girl above fourteen has lovers," he remarked; "but the love is of the calf description in most cases. If Miss Floyd has no heart I am the better pleased with her, and the more hopeful about her future. A woman with beauty and without heart can make of herself what she pleases. You are sure she left no lover on the Continent who will follow her to England?"

Again Grimrod saw that the eye-glasses mounted upon Mrs. Watchley's nose trembled, but she answered, quite calmly:

"I am quite sure. I have been the most careful of duennas, and Hilda will never give Lord Waldemar the slightest cause for displeasure."

"That is well," said the manager. "School your charge as I have directed. Don't mind her tempers, and don't let his lordship suspect that she is not an angel. I have a letter to post to-night and another to write, so I must be off."

After a few further words he took his departure, fitting like a shadow down the stairs.

The hall porter was still absent in the servants' hall, and Grimrod put on his great-coat, muffler and hat, and let himself quietly out at the front door without being seen.

He hurried down the wide avenue, pausing midway to turn and look back at the house with gloating eyes.

It was an extensive old mansion, built of gray

stone, and consisted of a massive central building three storeys in height, and tall tower-like wings connected with the main edifice by one-storeyed buildings, along whose fronts ran charming arcades. It was a grand pile, and was one of the "show places" of the county.

"Whoever reigns here and owns also the Waldemar estates ought to be happy above all others," thought the manager, appreciatively. "I would sell my soul this night if I might be Baron Waldemar and owner of Waldemar House and Floyd Manor and all the rest of the Waldemar belongings. But since I cannot be Baron Waldemar—"

He paused, with an odd laugh and an odd gleam in his eyes, and turned and hurried down the avenue like one who, his evil schemes having prospered, is well content.

He passed out at a small gate beside the lodge, having a private key, and hurried along the road in the gloom of the March night to his own home. There was a path through the manor to his house, but it led through the park, which was then unusually dark, and he preferred the public road.

His house was a pretty, ornamental brick cottage in the midst of handsome grounds. He let himself into his dwelling with his pass-key, removed his outer garments, and went to his library, or office as he preferred to call it.

Here he wrote that second and confidential letter which reached Darrel Moer with the other upon the following morning in the vestry of the little Bolton chapel directly after Moer's marriage to Honor Glint.

The letter written the manager rang his bell, and ordered his horse to be saddled and brought to the door immediately. Then he again equipped himself for the outer air.

The hour was not yet late, as he saw by glancing at his clock, and there was time to catch the late night mail if he hastened.

Taking his letters—the one Lord Waldemar had dictated and the one he had himself written—he mounted his horse and rode swiftly to the nearest post village, three miles distant. He was in time to catch the mail, and rode homeward at a slower pace, and with a strange exultation in his heart.

"I rather think," he said to himself, "that Mr. Darrel Moer has been employed in making love to some pretty 'Lancashire witch,' but he'll start for home on receiving that letter. Lord Waldemar may have designs of his own for the settlement of his grand-daughter. I presume he has. There is but one man in the world he really esteems and trusts, and that man is young, rich, and well connected, a Cornish baronet of ancient family. I feel it in my bones that he will want Miss Floyd to marry his favourite, young Sir Hugh Tregaron. But I have determined that she shall marry Mr. Darrel Moer. The girl may have some idea of her own in the matter. But the end will be that I shall triumph. I am the showman who pulls the wires to move all these puppets, and no one knows the fact but me. I alone rule the Waldemar succession!"

(To be continued.)

THE EARL OF DUDLEY has consented to the exhibition of the Countess of Dudley's diamonds and other jewels in the International Exhibition.

A PLAN has been presented to the Spanish Ministry for a tunnel under the Straits of Gibraltar, which might be connected with the shortest route to India. The length to be traversed would be 13,800 metres; while that of the contemplated Dover and Calais tunnel is stated as being 32,000.

GOOD NEWS FOR ART STUDENTS.—A large consignment of marbles, the results of excavations at Ephesus, is expected shortly in London; the same employed to transport them as completed her cargo. Students must not hope for works of the finest art by this means. The date of the Temple of Diana, its locality, and the character of the remains which have been brought to notice, promise relics which, whatever be their archaeological value, can hardly surpass even the sculptures of the Mausoleum, inferior as these are. The architectural aspect of the subject, as far as we know at present, is somewhat more interesting than the sculptural one.

Celebration of NORWEGIAN NATIONALITY.—The Norwegians have been holding high festival in celebration of the thousandth anniversary of the establishment of the kingdom of Norway. In the public squares of Christiania decorative monuments were erected. Prince Oscar, attended by the Prime Minister, Stang, unveiled the Harold monument in the presence of deputations from the Storting, the University, the Supreme Court, and the Norwegians resident in America.

DISCOVERY OF THE KEY TO A LOST LANGUAGE.—The great secret of the Etruscan language seems, we learn from Berlin, to have been solved at length. Dr. Corsoen, the latest interpreter of these Italian hieroglyphics which have so long mocked

all attempts at deciphering, has made them out to embody a language intimately connected with the Latin and its more ancient sisters of Umbria and Oskia.

TANGLED WOOINGS.

It was dusk when Miss Keyes reached home from her long visit in London. She had been travelling all day, but she changed her dress, drank her tea, and followed the rest of the village.

There was an amateur dramatic performance at the Mechanics' Institute; the hall was well filled and attention was fixed on the stage, where the "Lady of Lyons" was being performed. Miss Keyes gave one glance up at Claude Melnotte, and felt a strange, numb sensation run over her. Then the curtain fell, and she made her way unrecognized through the groups to the dressing-room at the back of the stage.

A whirl of preparation was going on there for the next scene. The greeting she received was warm and hurried. Miss Jackson was in her usual flutter when there was anything to be done.

"When did you come, Cora?" she exclaimed. "Have you been riding all day? Aren't you tired to death?"

"Not quite," replied Miss Keyes. "Who was on the stage when I came in?"

"Ralph Elliston and his wife," was the hurried response, and the eager performer vanished in a little flurry.

Miss Keyes sat down to collect herself. It was not tragic—only a common-place accidental meeting. Not even that yet—the actual encounter was to come. Well, there was no need that she should behave like a heroine of romance about it.

Then the others came back from the stage, and for the next half-hour Miss Keyes listened to and said pleasant things about her return. She saw Ralph Elliston across the room, but not within speaking distance. Then, being fatigued with her journey, she went home.

All the next day she was busy with her unpacking and getting settled.

There were great arrears of news to be brought up on both sides.

"Let me see," said her aunt; "Ralph Elliston brought his wife here after you went away. She is an Irish girl; very pretty. You must have seen her last night."

"Yes," Miss Keyes said, quietly. "Have any of these new plaids been worn here?" she continued, making a diversion.

Somehow she could not talk about it yet. Cora Keyes had divided her years as child and young lady about equally between this stillest of small villages and the crowds of a great city. There she was in a small way a belle and favourite. At home the other girls liked and looked up to her. Town culture and town polish created a contrast between her and her companions. She was an authority in most matters of dress, and was quite used to having her works and ways canvassed and discussed. Three years before, in London, she had met Ralph Elliston.

It was not quite the meeting of strangers. They had had some slight acquaintance as children, but for years he had been abroad.

Meanwhile Cora had grown into a young lady, and one night, dancing at a charitable ball, she had floated across his vision, and on the instant impulsive Ralph began his progress on a road that led him to grief.

They met often, with a frequency that was suspicious, but there were always reasons and excuses, if any had been needed.

Cora's friends were very gay, and she had not yet arrived at the years and experience which find dress and dancing a snare and music and the stage a desire.

For a month there was not much chance for thought about this new zest and brightness in her life.

By-and-by, when her stay drew near its close, and she was making a little wilder rush in the last week's gaieties by way of farewell, Ralph Elliston suddenly remembered that he had a standing invitation to visit an uncle of the same name who lived in Alderford.

I am not going to say one word to excuse her. She was young, only eighteen, but there are blunders for which youth is no excuse.

Afterwards, when the crash came, and Ralph Elliston found the lesson set for him which most men have to learn sooner or later, he could only judge her in the light in which she had presented herself to him. It was no comfort to him to despise her because he had loved her once.

He saw her at home, and it is but fair to say that he saw a great deal of her. It was one of those villages where everybody knows everything about

everybody else. So before a week of his stay was over the gossips were wagging their heads and watching.

One morning Miss Keyes sat busy with her sewing. Of late, when she stopped to think, something troubled her. I can't say that she faced herself very courageously.

Mrs. Kittredge came in. She had three daughters married and living contented lives, so she had nothing to do but to superintend the business of the neighbourhood.

"Susan's just back from Edinburgh," she said, after a while. "She heard a good deal about the Ellistons there. I suppose you know that this young man is engaged to his mother's adopted daughter."

"Ah, I had not heard of it," the young lady said, placidly. "I daresay it is true, however."

"She's at a finishing school now."

Mrs. Kittredge was determined not to spare an atom of her information.

If Miss Keyes had had a half-century's experience in world training she could not have kept a more unmoved face or unchanged manner. She went on with her unburdened stitching, sitting in her low chair, fair and sweet in the morning sunshine.

Mrs. Kittredge went away and told her neighbour that she "fancied there was nothing in it, after all—that about Ralph Elliston and Cora Keyes. There was Arthur Cozzens, too."

Yes, there was Arthur Cozzens.

The minute her visitor was out of the house Miss Keyes put down her work and began thinking about him.

After the first half-minute of angry jealousy she came to her senses, frightened at her position. What was it to her if Ralph Elliston was engaged to be married? She disbelieved the story, but—she wished she had the strength to wish it true. She had begun her game carelessly; it was out of her hands to manage now.

Arthur Cozzens had held her promise for a year. She had given him her word, as many young girls do, not because she loved him but because she thought he loved her, and this strong emotion carried her passionately forward. Now for six weeks he had been out of her thoughts as completely as if he had never existed.

Just about that time Ralph Elliston, sauntering down the main village street, met a brown-faced, broad-shouldered sailor, so handsome that he was moved to ask who it was.

"Arthur Cozzens—Cora Keyes's husband that is to be," was the reply. "He must be just back from his ship."

That was all.

Ralph Elliston felt as if he had been struck by lightning. But he did not drop. That is the worst of such hurts, they do not give a man an excuse for groaning.

He found himself at last at the door of her house. He had been going there when the blow fell, and in his bewilderment no other purpose presented itself.

His pale, grieved face struck her dumb. She rose and stood without speaking.

He crossed the room and confronted her.

"Is this true—this that I have heard?" he asked, chokingly.

She did not ask what.

"I have seen Arthur Cozzens," he continued.

"Yes," she said, desperately.

He turned on his heel without a word.

"Oh, Ralph, forgive me!" she cried.

"No," he answered, harshly, a black frown on his face.

He left her.

Five years later he would have taken the scene much more coolly and less dramatically. Now, being twenty-two, his special hurt filled all heaven and all earth.

Cora Keyes sat down among the ruins of her Carthage.

After all, it is not half so much the wrong of wrong-doing as the indignity of being caught in it that shocks us.

She had not been wilfully dishonourable. She had shut her eyes and drifted, and this was where she had landed.

While she sat there idle and pale the door-bell rang again, and through the door out of which Ralph Elliston had gone in his wrath Arthur Cozzens came in, with a lover's greeting.

He had not been used to enthusiasm in her behaviour; so when she turned a pale face towards him, and let him fold her in his arms without a word, he was not disappointed.

She was surprised at his sudden appearance, doubtless, and his own mind was so full of his own troubles that he did not specially note her manner, for he had come to tell her that he was a ruined man, and that their marriage must be put off into some re-

moture future while he laid another foundation for a fortune.

She bore it very calmly. She would wait for him, she said, when he offered release, "to the end of the world," dropping her face against his arm with a little sob of penitence and self-pity.

His stay was of the shortest. It was an hour or two stolen from other duties to say what he had in vain essayed to write. He went away, and Miss Keyes took up the tangle of her fate.

It had all come at once, as is usually the way in one's history. Long, common-place, eventless years—then a brief space crowded with change and trial—then other years as bare and unrelieved as at first.

After that day, when Cora Keyes's two lovers left her, three years went on as smoothly as if there had been no convulsions in her story. When the door slammed behind Ralph Elliston it shut him utterly out from her knowledge. She had barely heard his name since.

From Arthur Cozzens she heard irregularly, as sea-goers write. Once or twice in the time they had met in the unromantic fashion of engaged people of long standing.

Cora herself had changed much. That day and its memories made her what she was that night when she saw Elliston again—a calm, self-contained woman, who did not hope too much or fear anything. And Elliston, I suppose, quoted Locksley Hall consciously or unconsciously: "I am 'shamed through all my being to have loved so slight a thing," and the rest of it.

That was how matters stood when Cora Keyes came back from her usual winter visit in London, and found all Alderford busy with its amateur theatricals.

She had a cold, she said, and did not feel equal to attendance on that second night. She should read a little and go to bed early, she told the others in the house who were going.

But during the evening a messenger came in haste from the hall. Something had happened to one of the characters in a tableau, and would Miss Keyes take her place? It was only a few steps—she could not refuse. She put on her waterproof and ran over.

The scene was Mayer's "Consolation." Miss Morgan had stumbled on the edge of the stage, fallen, and cut and bruised her face. No one else was available as substitute and Miss Keyes had been sent for.

She hurried herself in the man's dress with all speed and hurried on the stage. Not until she stood by the side of the hospital cot did she recognize Ralph Elliston in the dying soldier.

The curtain went up, and Miss Keyes, in her motionless posture, her eyes fixed on her book, thought the interval eternity long.

She felt, without seeing the gaze fixed on her face. The group was an entire success. The pale intorse countenance of the wounded man was wonderfully effective, and Cora's dress made her look like a saint as well as a sister.

There was the half-minute's rest before the repetition of the scene.

Miss Keyes drew a long breath that was almost a sob.

Ralph spoke, not moving a muscle but his lips:

"Be patient—it will soon be over."

At any other time Cora's sense of the ridiculous would have set the absurd contrast between the motionless, outstretched stillness and the intense tones of the dying man's little speech. The sneer in his voice was so utterly at variance with his look and posture that instead of being tragic it was funny.

By the time the curtain fell the second time she was quite herself again, rather pale, but steady enough.

He said the regulation civil things in the little interval of greeting which was necessary to get through because of the speech of people. And she felt as if every sentence was a sting. She did not betray her pain and mortification, but she wished herself at the South Pole—that being the farthest point that occurred to her. Then presently she found herself at home again.

Cora Keyes was an intensely proud woman, and, like most other proud people, had an intensely sensitive vein in her composition. In a small way she was quite in the habit of being deferred to and thought much of. She knew very well with what judgment Ralph Elliston judged her, and the consciousness that she deserved it made the smart almost unendurable. She did not ask herself whether his contempt was harder to bear than another's. She cried a little, a few bitter tears, then set herself about keeping the matter hid from other people's eyes.

It was not a very difficult thing. It was really of a deal more consequence to herself than to any one else. So for ten days she heard his name only casually. She saw him a few times, riding with Mrs. Elliston, and on Sunday in the choir in the little church. Cora, resuming her old place, found a new



[TABLEAU VIVANT.]

contralto beside her, and after the sermon was duly presented to the lady.

Mrs. Elliston was very pretty and beautifully dressed. Cora took that in at a glance. Mrs. Elliston said at lunch that day that she had been introduced to Miss Keyes, and thought her very handsome—very cold and rather shy.

It fell out one day that Cora wanted a half-yard of something not to be found in the village shop. So, being thoroughly strong and well and a good walker, she started for the nearest town, two miles away. Having completed her purchases, she took the homeward road.

It was a part of country etiquette that no one with a vacant seat in his vehicle should pass a pedestrian without offering it for his or her acceptance. So Miss Keyes was not at all surprised or startled when a pair of horses was pulled up at her side. But her heart gave a queer flutter when Ralph Elliston leaned forward and asked her to ride.

She was muffled in a thick veil, and he had no idea that it was she. She hesitated a breath, then bravely threw back the screen from her face and accepted his offer.

She had taken a moral stand about the affair. Being some other woman's property, he was nothing to her. Then—as Mrs. Kittridge had said three years ago—there was Arthur Cozzens.

There was no embarrassment this time, or if there was it was all on his part.

He remarked on the condition of the roads and the weather, and expatiated on the merits of the off bay horse he was driving.

He had been to take Mrs. Elliston to the train, he said. She was going to Marbeach for a few days. Had Miss Keyes met her?

"Yes," Cora said, "a few minutes last Sunday." "She is a very sweet girl," he went on. "I'm sure you will like her. We are quite enthusiastic about her here."

Cora felt an indignant flush rising in her face. He must be trying to annoy her.

"We includes yourself as the principal enthusiast, I suppose," she said, tartly. "That sort of thing is the bridegroom's prerogative, I believe."

The angry red in her cheek matched itself in his. Either would have been glad of an excuse to quarrel, and the excuse seemed at hand.

But he bit his lips and struck his horses a vicious cut.

"Don't punish the poor beasts for my offence. I have no idea that Mrs. Elliston is not an angel," she said, sweetly.

"That sort of thing being the bridegroom's prerogative, doesn't prevent her friends from being just to her," was the cold retort.

"Pardon me," she said, with a little mocking laugh. "I was wrong in forgetting that the romance of matrimony had not yet worn off."

"Romance of matrimony! I don't understand you, Miss Keyes. Of whom are you speaking?" he asked, with a puzzled face.

"Mrs. Ralph Elliston—your wife, I suppose," said Cora.

He gave a long low whistle that ended in a laugh hearty and genuine.

"My dear young lady, Fanny is my Cousin Ralph's wife. I am only her devoted admirer and cousin-in-law."

Cora gave a gasp.

The feminine road out of heroics is through tears. She swallowed hers, but found herself incapable of speech.

He saw the flutter of red and white in her face, and—it was not manly, perhaps, but it was quite manlike—the impulse of revenge was too strong for his Christianity.

For three years hurt pride and a hurt heart had held possession of him; his head had decided that she was an unscrupulous flirt deserving any punish-

ment any man might be able to inflict, and there was a degree of righteous satisfaction in being chosen as the avenger of his own wrongs.

"And it mattered a little to you?" he said, with a thrill and quiver in his voice.

"One hates to be made ridiculous by a blunder," she replied, pettishly.

After that there was a diversion. The horses turned a corner sharply.

"It isn't the way home," Cora remarked.

"No," was the response; "but the road is better here, and there is a thaw coming."

They were gone two hours, coming home in a silver winter twilight—a tender mingling of sunset and mourne. There had been not a word said that Arthur Cozzens might not have heard.

Miss Keyes, remembering her absent lover, and recalling the warning of the past, could find nothing with which to reprove herself. Yet she had a quaking sense of danger at hand.

Matters went on for a fortnight. Elliston worked delicately. He kept the fact of her engagement in view, and never said or did a thing of which the guardians of their neighbours' affairs could make gossip. Yet Cora felt a difference. He had forgiven her, she thought, and women do not often find it in their hearts to be merciless to an old lover who loves still. So she thought friendliness quite possible on her part, and he, understanding her position, would never venture to hope anything more than that. She was not the first who has attempted that problem and failed.

Elliston was not entirely cold-blooded. Conscience got the better of him sometimes, then he fell back on his office of Nemesis, and recited Cora's offences, and persuaded himself that he was doing his duty in the strictest way.

But there was a most unaccountable fascination about his line of action.

Just at this stage of affairs his motives grew rather mixed. His purpose became somewhat hidden in the details of achievement. He had not supposed that revenge could come so near being a labour of love.

Events precipitated the crisis.

One morning he called with some message from a friend as an excuse. His visits were infrequent; his tactics involved only their chance meetings, which came often enough.

A letter lay on Miss Keyes's work-table.

She took it up, playing with it agitatedly while she talked.

"Captain Cozzens is coming home," she said, at last, not raising her eyes. "You know, I suppose, that I am interested in him?"

"Yes," said Ralph. "Does he remain long?" "Until I am ready to go away with him. That will not be long now," was the reply.

"Is he coming soon?" he asked.

"Any day," said Cora. "He can't be reckoned for as ordinary mortals can, you know."

Then they glided into some unimportant talk of wind and weather, and over-sea ports, and Elliston went away at last with a feeling that somehow he was no more a winner in this game than he had been in the other. The girl was so sweet and composed and self-possessed. He fancied he was going to give her a shadow of a hint of what he had suffered, and she had forestalled him by announcing the return of her lover and her coming marriage. He had half-forgotten that old engagement—wilfully ignoring it, perhaps—and now she would flatter herself that she had a second time drawn him into her toils.

Having descended to the use of small weapons, it was doubly galling to be put in the position of vanquished.

That night there was some kind of informal excursion party.

Chance and a little diplomacy made Ralph Miss Keyes's escort. There was an impromptu supper and a dance at a friend's farmhouse ten miles away, and they began their homeward ride deep in the night. A wasted low moon cast long, ghostly shadows. They sped in silence through a dim white land.

They had not much to say. Miss Keyes was sleepy, and the charm of their rapid flight possessed her. Besides perhaps a little unavailing regret that Fate had ordered her life in such fashion made her feel that she and Ralph met on not quite common-place ground.

You see she was blissfully unaware of Ralph Elliston's aim, and thought him quite sincere and unconscious in his betrayal of his still-languishing tenderness. She was destined to a speedy awakening from that delusion.

"Miss Cora," Ralph said, after a while, very deliberately, "I must return your confidence of this morning. I am engaged to Mademoiselle De Rojas, my mother's ward."

She started as if with the shock of an actual physical blow. After a half-minute she spoke. Her voice was perfectly even, cold, and hard.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Elliston, as well on the manliness of your conduct as on your engagement," she said.

Their positions had changed now. She felt all the contempt her voice expressed. It was his turn now to write.

"You are hard on me," he said, sullenly, at last.

"Harder than you deserve?" she ejaculated, scornfully. "For the last few weeks you have taken every means short of speech to make me feel that you cared for me. You have done this knowing in what relation I stand to Mr. Cozzens. It is more inexcusable because of what you have just told me. Ralph Elliston, you are a coward."

Cora Keyes was undeniably in a rage. He knew women pretty well, but in his own disturbed state of mind it did not occur to him that this might be the expression of an emotion which could have no other vent.

"Perhaps I am," he said, answering the epithet she had bestowed on him.

Then there was silence, broken only by the quick tramp of the horses' feet.

"You have no justification," said Cora, breaking out again as if her wrath gathered in brooding.

"I have," answered Ralph. "Three years ago you jilted me shamelessly and heartlessly."

"So you attempted revenge," she replied, with a bitter little laugh. "Chivalry!"

"Sneer, if you please. I loved you then, and, Cora," cried Ralph, his voice breaking suddenly, "I love you now."

Love-making is too delicate an operation to be attempted with a pair of restless horses in hand. The creatures felt the inattention of their driver, and started off with an energy that took all his muscle to control.

Flying like the wind, they overtook another vehicle with a single occupant. The gentleman turned at the sound of the racing hoofs behind him, and gave Cora an opportunity to see his face full in the light.

"Arthur!" she screamed, then they whirled by.

An eighth of a mile beyond they came to a comparative stand-still.

"Captain Cozzens?" Ralph asked.

"Yes."

He turned his horses and drove slowly back to meet the on-coming vehicle. Miss Keyes introduced the two gentlemen, and asked a few surprised questions.

"You were going home?" Arthur asked, at length.

"I will waive my claim to Miss Keyes's society for the remainder of the ride, if she chooses," Ralph Elliston said, coldly.

Miss Keyes did choose, and the change was effected. Ralph lingered about her, ostensibly arranging robes and wrappings, at the risk of being deserted by his impatient horses.

"Good-night," he said, at last.

Some imp of the perverse possessed Cora. She drew off her glove and gave him her hand.

"Good-bye, Ralph," she said, dropping her voice almost to a whisper on the last word.

Then they started and left him standing.

A little farther on he passed them, turning to wave farewell.

Then Cora and her accepted lover filled the rest of the way with steady talk of the past and future, and parted at last with a quiet kiss, common-place and friendly.

Ralph Elliston went home with her last touch and last word haunting him. He had taken a plunge in earnest. He had not an inch of standing-ground under his feet.

Whether he was winner or not in his small game he did not know. He did feel that a few more such triumphs on either side would ruin him. Whether her tone held a sneer, or regret, or forgiveness, or simple indifference, he could not decide. In any case it meant farewell. He spent the rest of the night in getting matters in train to leave for Edinburgh next day.

Miss Keyes drank the cup of tea kept ready for her, locked herself into her room, and finished the night in secret session with herself.

The consequence was that, having changed her dress for breakfast, she went down to that meal with heavy eyes and colourless cheeks. She announced Arthur Cozzens's arrival with perfect composure, answered all questions with calm matter-of-factness, volunteered a few remarks about her probable future plans, and conducted herself in all respects like a very common-sense young woman.

Arthur came by the middle of the morning.

She had got back the colour and light into her face by that time. It was he who was quiet and dull, and somewhat lacking in lover's enthusiasm. But Cora was so intent on sustaining her own part, so in earnest in making reparation to the man whom she had unawares so wronged, that she saw nothing amiss.

"I saw your friend, Ralph Elliston, this morning," he said. "He was at the station going away. He sent a message to you. He is going to Edinburgh," Arthur continued, with his eyes on her face.

"He said nothing about it last night. Something has happened, I think," said Cora.

"Something has happened. I have come home," he said, dryly. "Cora, the man is in love with you!"

"I know it," was the response.

"And you?" queried Arthur.

"Have exercised the privilege of informing him that Mr. Arthur Cozzens is in his way," she answered.

"Mr. Arthur Cozzens will take himself out of the way if you wish."

"I don't wish," Cora said. "Arthur, do you think it so easy to be off with the old love?"

In all of which she was not unconsciously treacherous or more untruthful than other women. She was suffering reaction in the form of a little spasm of self-sacrifice; and if Ralph had presented himself that morning she would probably have told him with perfect sincerity for the minute that she never wished to see his face again.

So before Captain Cozzens left the house it was settled that the wedding should take place six weeks from that day.

You can imagine the chaotic hurry which set in from that moment.

Miss Keyes had very little spare time for thought if she had wanted it—which she didn't.

Ralph Elliston was out of sight, and so let us hope out of mind.

Arthur Cozzens was with her more or less of each day. It dawned on Miss Keyes's absorbed mind after awhile that he had changed in these last two years. He was preoccupied and absent—talked always with that tone in his voice and look in his eyes as if his body was in one place and his soul in another. But then, she reasoned, he had been anxious and over-worked, and even now success was not entirely assured.

One morning, four weeks after his return, Arthur came back from a short visit to his ship, which was being refitted.

"Cora, I am ordered away in three days," he said. "There is no appeal. I have tried to get my leave of absence extended, but have failed."

She was, as usual, bending over her sewing. She did not speak for a minute, not even raising her head. When she did there were tears in her eyes, and her lips trembled.

"Don't leave me, Arthur, again. Take me with you," she faltered, and then, for the first time in his acquaintance with her, he saw her cry—heard her, too—for all the pent-up excitement and nervous strain of these weeks broke into sobs.

He knelt beside her, and drew her head against his shoulder.

He did not speak, but in the next few minutes he did a great deal of thinking.

"Can you be ready to be married to-morrow?" he asked.

"Yes," she sobbed, "anything. Only don't leave me."

So the household was struck dumb with the announcement of the new programme. Cora herself went about as one in a dream.

Arthur was away disposing of a few business matters which had been left among the last things which are always to be attended to.

So the morrow came; the few guests had assembled, and Cora in her room had put the last touches to her toilet, and was contemplating herself with satisfaction.

She had no thought of indulging in heroics. She had chosen future, and meant to be true to herself and to the man who was to share it with her.

Then the minutes slipped on, and there came a dreamy little pause of anxious waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom.

He, meanwhile, was lying on his back with a broken leg, half way from Marbeach, wondering if he should freeze to death before any one would come to find him.

At length Miss Keyes took off her bridal dress and ornaments, still unwedded, and Captain Cozzens was established in the next room, with two surgeons in attendance.

Of course the question of his departure was settled. His ship went without him, and the utmost deliberation took the place of the late hurry in the Keyes's mansion.

Arthur Cozzens's convalescence proceeded satisfactorily and slowly. There was not an hour of anxiety over his case. Cora had no excuse for making a hero of him. He fretted, as men usually do, and thought his sufferings unsurpassed in the history of the race.

She would not have admitted to herself even that

she looked at this postponement in the light of a reprieve. But her spirits rose; he heard her singing about the house, and the face that bent over him grew fresher and brighter every day.

She made more of his days than he guessed. They were gradually falling in love with each other after the most romantic fashion, and entirely in ignorance of what they were doing.

And Ralph Elliston? He had gone, as he had said, to Edinburgh. Mademoiselle De Rojas was there—at home again from a long Continental tour. Ralph's mother took him apart and gave him serious advice.

"You cannot expect Nina to wait for ever. There is no reason why you should not marry at once. I wish you would act, Ralph, as if you had some heart in the matter."

The young man gave a lazily resigned groan.

"Mother, I'll leave it with you," he said. "You and Nina may arrange it between yourselves. I won't interfere when the time comes."

"Ralph! such talk is an insult," was the reply.

"Is it?" he said, raising himself on his elbow. "I'm sure I didn't mean it to be. Nina is a nice girl, and deserves a great deal better fellow than I ever shall be. But, mother, you know as well as I do that she loves me any more than I love her, if you will hear plain English. The question is now—does Nina want to be married at once?"

"No, sir," a ringing, excited voice answered, "neither now nor at any other time. I do not love you, Ralph Elliston, and I never have. I'm very glad to be rid of your diamonds. I hate you!" cried Nina, stamping her foot and waxing hysterical.

He was at his feet at the first word that announced her presence.

She had come into the hall, and through the open door had heard the speech.

Every bit of the lazy listlessness vanished from his face.

He led her unresistingly to the couch he had left, and stood beside her smoothing her hair while she sobbed herself quiet.

"If you will leave us, mother," he said, with stern courtesy.

Mrs. Elliston, somewhat alarmed at the explosive result of her match-making, took herself away.

The two had a long, sober talk.

Ralph felt as if fate was something fearful. In his pocket he had a letter from an Alderford acquaintance, received that morning, announcing the Cozzens's change of plan.

"By the time this reaches you Cora Keyes will be Cora Cozzens," the writer had said.

Before this interview was ended he began to think that life was "one of those things which no fellow can understand."

"My poor child," he said. "So there is some one else. Why didn't you ask for release? You had the right, I am sure."

"Your mother has been so good, and she wished it so very much," said Nina.

Then by careful coaxing Elliston persuaded her to tell the name of the some one else.

It came like a thunderbolt.

"Captain Cozzens! I saw him a great deal last winter."

"He loves you?" Elliston asked, and his lips were unsteady and white.

"Yes," she replied. "He did not mean to tell me. It came out one night by chance."

"So this Captain Cozzens asked you to marry him?" said Ralph.

"No, he came next day and told me that he was engaged to some one who had waited a long time," was Nina's reply. "He said he had behaved like a villain."

"In which I agree with him," said forgetful Ralph.

"What next?"

"Then I told him about you—not your name, you know—and sent him away, and I have not seen him since."

All at once Ralph Elliston's heart rose and choked him. He had borne his pain and disappointment patiently and silently. Now the intense misery of the blunder they had all made to be so near explanation, then just to miss it, rushed over him like a torrent.

"Nina—dear little Nina—listen to me. Arthur Cozzens was married yesterday, and his wife is the only woman I ever loved in my life."

She gave a little cry. The woman's heart in her forgot her own pain in learning his.

"She loved you?" Nina faltered.

"No," Ralph answered, with a little moan. "I do not know."

He gave two or three tearless gasps.

A few days later Nina was in London. It had seemed as though she should go away for a little while until time had softened to Mrs. Elliston the shock of the new order of events. Ralph escorted her

thither, and left her in the family of some friends. Then he went his own way with his own miseries.

One night an item in the evening paper rehearsed Arthur Cozzens's misfortune, enlarging upon it in a sensational fashion, and bringing him in a dying condition into the presence of his waiting bride. Nina read it, and went away quietly by herself. But all her ungoverned Spanish blood was roused. He was dying or dead, and that last act in the play swept away all promises that had ruled his past. She had given him up for life, but death gave him back to her.

Something of that she said in a letter to Cora Keyes, incoherent and extravagant, yet telling the whole story plainly enough. She did not know but the end had already come, it was days since the accident, but she posted her letter that night, and prepared to follow it next morning. She had learned enough from Ralph to know Cora's name and Arthur Cozzens's whereabouts.

Cora received her letter in due season. A storm followed, but she had it out by herself lying face down on the carpet in a childish fashion of getting over her paroxysm.

She was pulled down from a pinnacle of heroism is bad enough; to be self-convicted of sacrificing somebody instead of yourself is worse; but to find that instead of making a lover happy by being severely true to one's word you are forcing yourself on a man who doesn't want you is more than feminine flesh and blood can bear.

She recalled the scene in which Arthur had announced his near departure, and ground her teeth. All this time she had no idea that Nina and Arthur Cozzens were even acquaintances.

She rose at last and dressed herself with great care. Then she went and confronted Arthur. There was no danger of relapse or other tragical conclusion. She did not soften the shock.

"Are you going out, Cora?" he asked, placidly, seeing her in out-of-door dress.

"Yes," she said, coolly, "I'm going to drive over to the station to meet Mademoiselle De Rojas. I suppose she will come by the next train. Here is her letter," and she laid Nina's epistle within his reach.

Before he could speak the door was shut behind her. She came back again presently, and stood beside him busy with her gloves.

"You see, Arthur, this puts an end to everything. I was in a temper, of course, when that came, and I don't think I'm in a Christian frame of mind yet. But this young lady will never know. I shall bring her here, and you will be good friends again. No, don't speak. I think you've treated me badly, and I haven't forgiven you, but I wouldn't marry you now if you were the proverbial last man. Kiss me once," she faltered, breaking down all at once, with a sudden thought of the gossip she should have to face.

When Nina left the railway carriage in the chilly sunset she had a half-frightened sense of her loneliness and the strangeness of her position.

But somebody met her with Miss Keyes's name on her lips, and she was escorted to the side of a basket phaeton, where a very pretty girl was holding the reins and waiting with an expectant face.

"Nina De Rojas? Will you step in here beside me, and we will drive straight home? Your letter came this noon."

Cora did her best. Before the five miles were over her visitor had half forgotten in what relation they stood to each other, and was telling her story.

"Ralph and I dissolved our engagement," said Nina. "Ralph?" exclaimed Cora.

"Ralph Elliston. You know him, I think," was the reply, with a sidelong look under her lashes.

"Yes," Miss Keyes said, faintly. "Go on."

That night Nina wrote to Ralph Elliston. A week afterwards he appeared on the scene. He and Cora had a long interview. Nina, still Miss Keyes's guest, met him in the hall.

"Well?" she said, eagerly.

"She has refused me utterly," he said.

"Horrid little thing!" was the laughing reply.

But in April, when Captain Cozzens had a new command given him, and urged his marriage, Miss Keyes seconded his appeal. And there was a double wedding in Alderford Church, Nina going from Cora's home, and the paternal Keyes giving away both brides.

Mrs. Elliston did not attend the ceremony, but she gave both couples a reception which was the town talk for a week. And the two girls maintain as amicable relations as if there had never been the least conflict in their respective claims.

From which I infer that, blunder we never so blindly, our fate weaves the appointed pattern.

K. R.

EVERYTHING is now ready for the reconstruction of the Vendôme Column in the Place Vendôme, at

Paris. The plans are all prepared, the expenses being calculated at 250,000 francs, and M. Normand, the architect, is only waiting for orders to commence operations.

FACETIA.

WHAT is the perfection of politeness? Offering a standing joke a seat.

It is sweet to have friends you can trust, and convenient sometimes to have friends who are not afraid to trust you.

A POLICEMAN was seen the other day during a rain storm with an umbrella, trying to arrest the rain.

WHY does a German naturally make the best performer on a wind instrument? Because he was born a Teuton (a-tootin').

An old sailor who had a great aversion to life on sea said he was like a lobster, as he never came ashore without the risk of getting in hot water.

WHAT is that which is ever before us, can never be seen, and yet all are looking towards it? To-morrow.

A CRUSTY old bachelor says that love is a wretched business, consisting of a little singing, a little crying, a little "dying," and a deal of lying.

TRUE!—"Truth," says a solemn contemporary, "in the picture, the manner is the frame which displays it to advantage." We know lots of fellows who employs a deal of gilt to frame their truths. —Fun.

"How many are there of ye's down there?" shouted an Irish overseer to some men in a coal pit. "Five," was the answer. "Well, then, the half of ye's come up here."

"MAMMA," said a delicate little boy, "I'm afraid a fever would go hard with me." "Why, my son?" "Cause I'm so small it wouldn't have room to turn."

The "leap year," or new mode of eating philosophies in Raleigh, is for the young lady to hold the almond between her teeth and the young gentleman to bite it off.

Nerveless Old Lady (to Deck Hand on Steamboat): "Mr. Steamboat-man, is there any fear of danger?"

Deck Hand (carelessly): "Plenty of fear, ma'am, but not a bit of danger."

"MR. SMITH, I wish to speak to you a moment privately. Permit me to take you apart." Smith (who wasn't the least bit frightened): "Certainly, sir, if you'll promise to put me together again."

A LOGICAL REASON—ANSWER AND QUESTION. Jane: "Well, who you might tell as who—?"

Mary: "I ain't a-going to tell you nothin' about it, and I'll tell you why, cos why should I?" —Fun.

AN UNREASONABLE and somewhat misanthropic acquaintance remarks he has often heard the proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed," but he says he can't see any point in it. He has a friend in need who is always borrowing money of him.

A POOR RETURN.—A Loan Exhibition of Porcelain is now open at Salisbury. What must be the feelings of those who have lent their precious treasures when they read the startling announcement that the collection will be "broken up" in September? —Punch.

FAITH.

Isabel: "That's Paris after the siege, you know. Isn't it terrible to look at?"

Aleck (who has a touching belief in his elder brother): "Ah, if Georgy had only been there with his tool-box he'd have soon put it all to rights, wouldn't he?" —Punch.

"WHO is he?" said a passer-by to a policeman who was endeavouring to raise an intoxicated individual who had fallen into the gutter. "Can't say, sir," replied the policeman; "he can't give an account of himself." "Of course not," said the other; "how can you expect an account from a man who has lost his balance?"

ART-CRITICISM.

First Aberdonian (from the road): "Fat's the man-nie deen?"

Second Ditto (who has got over the wall to inspect): "He's drainin' wi' paint."

First Boy: "Fat's he drainin'? Is't bonny?"

Second Dito (after a pause, critically): "Oh, na, it's anything but bonny!!" —Punch.

CONSUMPTION OF VITALS.—Here, at Midaummer, are coals at from twenty-eight to thirty shillings a ton! Is it not time for us to consider how much longer we can continue to light the world with gas, supply the world's steam-engines with fuel, and at the same time afford domestic fires? M. Thiers proposes to denounce the Commercial Treaty with England. Might not we as well begin to think of denouncing the exportation of coals? —Punch.

"NICE weather for corn!" said a minister to one of his parishioners the other day. "Yes," said the

farmer, "but bad for grain and grass." A few days later they met again. "A fine rain we had yesterday," said the minister; "good for grass and grain." "Yes," was the reply, "but awful bad for corn!"

GROUND OF A STRIKE.

Stout Customer: "What, two pence for a shave?" Barber: "Yes, sir, fact is I find that all these strikes make people come here with such long faces that I have twice the amount of ground to get over."

—Fun.

YOUNG HEADS UPON OLD SHOULDERS.

Enter Agnes: "Oh, how nice and cool you must feel, grandmamma, dear! Why mayn't I wear a low body like you and Aunt Methusala?"

Grandmamma: "My dear Agnes, what nonsense! Why, you're scarcely more than a mere child! You'd look a perfect fright!"

A DRAWING ROOM STUDY.

Hostess: "Oh, Mr. Singleton, you know you promised to sing; I can't let my company all go away like this."

Mr. Singleton: "Yes, ah, yes; I think perhaps if I were to sing one of my comic songs (with a singer) it might keep them going, you know." —Fun.

A KNOCK-DOWN BLOW.

Gus (yawning): "Hannah, you're the dearest girl in the world!"

Hannah: "Don't be foolish, Gus; you talk like an auctioneer or what's-his-name!"

Gus: "Explain, love!"

Hannah: "Why, don't you see Goosdy, you're Hannah-praiser?" —Fun.

CAPTAIN BROWN'S "COMPANY."—Mrs. Jones requests the pleasure of Captain Brown's company to a small party on Friday evening next. 21, S—Place, Monday." Captain Brown presents his compliments to Mrs. Jones, and regrets that thirteen privates will be detained under arrest, and two sergeants are on the sick list; the rest of Captain Brown's company will have much pleasure in waiting upon Mrs. Jones on Friday evening."

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING. Professional Philanthropist: "So you can do what I can't, my little man? Well, what is it? Can you read?"

Street Arab: "No, guv'nor!"

P. P.: "Can you write?"

S. A.: "No, guv'nor!"

P. P.: "Well what can you do that I cannot do?"

S. A.: "Vy, stand on my 'ead, and drink a quart's o' gin!" —Fun.

SUIT YOUR TALK TO YOUR COMPANY.

HANDBOOK OF ETIQUETTE.

Mrs. Clovermead: "And, Dan, you'll bring the trap—(recollecting herself—her fashionable cousin, from London, is on a visit at the farm)—We shall want the carriage to drive into the town after luncheon, Daniel."

Daniel: "Yes, mum—(hesitating—he had noticed the correction)—be I—(in a loud whisper)—be I to change my trowsers, mum?" ! —Punch.

A CAPACIOUS DEMAND.

It seems the builders have "run up" houses until people begin to expect too much from such excited dwellings.

House.—Wanted, on lease, an eight or ten roomed house, with a studio, or capacity for making one. The neighbourhood of Kensington or Notting Hill preferred. —Apply, etc.

A house with "a capacity" for making a studio? This artist will next advertise for an easel with a capacity for painting pictures —Fun.

PROSPERITY.

A writer in the *Times* says the manufacturers are in great difficulty as to how to conduct their business. They are, says he:

Openly heard to express a hope that they will never again know a season of such prosperity in trade. Owing to the indolent habits of the workmen, less work is now being done in some establishments than in seasons of dullness, and less profits are realized.

This puzzles us! When there is less work doing, with less profit than usual, how the season can be one of such prosperity is a conundrum we cannot solve, unless all manufacturers are as financially brilliant as the manufacturers of boots who sold them so cheap that he lost a shilling on every pair, and could only manage to recoup himself by selling them in large quantities. —Fun.

GIVEN AND TAKEN.—An enthusiastic French sportsman went to a breakfast given in sign of the commencement of the shooting season. The talk was of game, when suddenly in rushed a servant exclaiming to the host that a hare had been seen moving about on the lawn. Out went the enthusiastic sportsman, gun in hand, fired at the hare and missed him. The hare, scratching his nose, stood on his hind legs, presented a horse-pistol at the enthusiastic sportsman, and fired in return. No one was hurt; but the enthusiastic sportsman was naturally astounded, until at last it was explained

to him that the hare was a performing animal which had been hired from a neighbouring show. The sportsman's charge had of course been tampered with by the confidential servant.

HAT-TITUDE'S EVERYTHING.

An ingenuous American—who has probably seen such things in the Strand in old days—has “invented” and patented a “luminous hat.” These, he says, would

Preserve the wearer from being run over by cabs at night, and would, to some extent, enable a saving in the lighting of streets with gas to be effected.

There is another advantage which he overlooks. Husbands, discovered by their watchful spouses in the act of attempting to unlock the front door with the butt-end of a cigar, might plead their hats as an excuse for light-headedness.—*Fun.*

HIGHLAND DREAM OF BLISS.—“I know what sort of Heaven you be wantin’!” shouted an earnest Highland minister, much esteemed in his present locality, into the ears of an apathetic congregation, to whom he had delivered, without any apparent effect, a vivid and impressive address on the glory of heaven. “I know what sort of heaven you’d be wantin’. You’d be wantin’ that all the seas would be hot water, and that all the rivers would be rivers of whiskies, and that all the hills and the mountains would be leaves of sugar! That’s the sort o’ heaven you’d be wantin’!” Moreover, he added, warming to his work, “you’d be wantin’ that all the corn-stocks would be pipe-staples, and tobaccoes, and aneeshin’, that’s the sort o’ heaven you’d be wantin’!” The congregation enjoyed the notion amazingly, and talked of the long journey with considerable pleasure all the Sunday after.

IMPATIENCE HATH ITS PRIVILEGE.

So says the immortal Frenchman, Jacques Pierrot, whose name has been corrupted into Shakespeare, and who is now habitually suspected of being an Englishman. What would he say to this fiery advertisement?

Lost.—Reward of Five Pounds.—Stolen, or taken for a “lark,” from my offices, in Skipper Street, a first-class brown silk umbrella, with a silver ring, on which my name was engraved in full. It returned within three days from the date of the loss. The matter will be at an end, and no questions asked; if withheld after that date I hereby offer a reward of Five Pounds sterling for such information, either public or private, as will lead to the conviction of the party so detaining it. This is not the first, the second, or the third time I have been tricked in the same way, and I am now prepared to spend Fifty Pounds, if necessary, to make an example of somebody, who would, most likely, be highly indignant if he were considered other than a gentleman, but who I, and I am sure the public and the press, will brand as a mean wretch of the lowest grade.

We can only add what is said to children when inclined to forget themselves: “There’s a temper!”

—*Punch.*

CABBAGE AND PORTERAGE.—The following anecdote is now going the rounds: An officer who was ordered on duty from one station to another in his travelling claim inserted the item “Porter, 6d.” This was struck out by the War Office. The officer wrote back stating that the porter named had conveyed his baggage from one station to another, and he would otherwise have had to make use of a cab, which would have cost 1s. 6d. In answer to this he received “an official,” stating that under those circumstances his claim would be allowed, but that he should have used the term “porterage” instead of “porter.” He being unable, we presume, to resist the temptation that seized him, answered to the effect that, although he could not discover a precedent for the use of the word “porterage” he would nevertheless do as he was told, and wished to know whether he should use the term “cab-bage” when he meant “cab”? The result, we hear, was a severe reprimand from the War Office.

COULDN'T BE CHOKED OFF.

We have heard of a rural philosopher, who had somewhat advanced in years without learning much of the mysteries of nature. What knowledge the old gentleman had gleaned was entirely independent of science. He did not know whether a microscope was “something to eat or a new-fangled machine for farming.” A young friend, fresh from school, once paid him a visit, and was very anxious to enlighten the old man on the wonders of the microscope, a specimen of which he carried about him. While the old philosopher was making a frugal meal in the field at noon the youth produced his microscope, and explained its operation, which he illustrated by showing its power upon several bugs and diverse minute atoms of animate matter on hand. To his surprise, the aged pupil did not manifest much astonishment, and, stung by his indifference, he detailed to him how many scores of living creatures he devoured at every mouthful, and in each drop which quenched his thirst. At this his hearer was sceptical; to prove the fact the boy snatched from his hand a chunk of rich cheese which he was devouring, and, placing it under the magnifier, the mass of wriggling animalcula was triumphantly pointed at

The old man gazed upon the sight indifferently, and at length, with the utmost nonchalance, took another huge bite.

“Don’t,” exclaimed the boy, “don’t eat it, Uncle Ben; don’t you see ‘em? See ‘em squirm and wriggle?”

“Let ‘em squirm and wriggle,” said the philosopher, munching away calmly, “they’ve got the worst out o’ them; they kin stan’ it, I kin,” and he deliberately finished his meal.

THE DEPARTED MIKE.

The following dialogue once took place between a lord mayor and an Irish shop-lifter:

“What’s gone of your husband, woman?”

“What’s gone of him, your honour! Faith, and he’s gone dead.”

“Ah! pray what did he die of?”

“Die, yer honour! he died of a Friday.”

“I don’t mean what day of the week, but what complain’t?”

“Oh! what complaint, yer honour! faith, and it’s himself that did not get time to complain.”

“Oh! ay—he died suddenly?”

“Rather that way, yer honour.”

“Did he fall in a fit?”

No answer.

“He fell down in a fit, perhaps?”

“A fit, yer honour—why, no, not exactly that. He fell out of a window, or through a cellar-door—I don’t know what they call it.”

“Ay, ay! and broke his neck?”

“No, not quite that, yer worship.”

“What then?”

“There was a bit of a string, or cord, or that like, and it throttled poor Mike.”

TO A DEWDROP.

BRIGHTEST gem of nature's moulding,

Hanging pendant on the trees,

Bright, prismatic rays unfolding,

Quivering 'neath the Southern breeze—

Hanging on the leaves which, awaying,

Gently bear you to and fro,

With each movement quick displaying

Hues entrancing as you go—

Did the wind no longer sway thee

Lost would be each brilliant hue ;

Few would adoration pay thee,

If a simple drop of dew.

Thus in life, man's virtues laying

Undisturbed by winds of strife,

Lack the impulse for displaying

All the beauties of this life.

But when trouble's winds are dashing

Round about the “Ark of Life”

Then each virtue, brightly flashing,

Glitters 'mid the darkest strife.

WALTER W. WELLS.

GEMS.

At twenty years of age the will reigns, at thirty the wit, at forty the judgment.

YOUTHFUL rashness skips like a hare over the meshes of good counsel.

THE vine bears three grapes; the first of pleasure, the second of drunkenness, the third of repentance.

EDUCATE the whole man—the head, the heart, the body; the head to think, the heart to feel, and the body to act.

DEATH is but a kind and welcome servant, who unlocks with noiseless hand life's flower-encircled door to show us those we love.

PEACE makes plenty, plenty makes pride, pride breeds quarrel, and quarrel brings war; war brings spoil, and spoil poverty; poverty patience, and patience peace. So peace brings war, and war brings peace.

THE hopeless man is dead to society; and the man who seeks nothing better than what is at present is dead to action. It is our duty not only to attempt something better, but it is our life, our energy, to believe in its possibility or attainability by some means or other.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SODA BISCUITS.—Into a pan containing five quarts sifted flour put two even teaspoonfuls pulverized soda, and a little salt—having a hole in the centre of the flour already prepared; pour into the flour four cups of sour milk—all the better if partly cream; stir the milk and soda a minute, till it foams; then mix with flour into a firm dough, if spring wheat; work but little, and get it into the oven as quickly as possible.

STRAWBERRY SHORT CAKE.—Rub a large spoonful of lard and one of butter in one quart of sifted flour;

put in a little salt, and make a dough of cold water. Roll it out in thin cakes about the size of a breakfast plate; put in a layer of strawberries with a light sprinkle of sugar, then another cake of dough, another layer of strawberries and sugar, with a top layer of dough. Bake it slowly in an oven or stove, and eat for lunch or for dessert with sugar and butter sauce.

BROILING MEATS.—When meats are broiling on a gridiron over hot coals the sudden heat applied sears the outside, which shuts in the juices, and the rapid application of heat soon cooks the meat through, if in moderately thin pieces. It is then tender, juicy and palatable. Those who never broil their fresh meat, fish or poultry, do not know the excellencies of a properly cooked dish of animal food. Of all methods for fowl broiling is the best—provided that the cook is active enough to handle the gridiron and meat dexterously, so as not to make charcoal of an atom, and yet quickly cook every part of the meat sufficiently to suit the taste of the consumer.

STATISTICS.

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE.—The police accounts for the financial year ending the 31st of March, 1872, show that the receipts for the service of the Metropolitan Police amounted to 909,859. This amount included 219,283, from the Parliamentary vote, consisting chiefly of the contribution upon the rental assessed, which is 20,890,178, also 55,777, from the parishes on rate warrants, 97,800, for special services of the police at the public offices and at private establishments, and 20,785, from proprietors, drivers, and conductors of public carriages. The expenditure included 25,516, for the establishment and office expenses, 711,949, for pay, clothing, and equipment of the force, 46,235, for erection, purchase, rent, repairs, rates, and expenses of police stations and lecture houses, 19,204, for fuel and light, 13,472, for horses, vans, carts, etc., 6,551, for medical expenses and the funerals of 43 police officers, 70,587, for superannuations, in addition to 21,000, supplied from the superannuation fund. The number of persons belonging to the Metropolitan Police Force on the 1st of January, 1871, was 9,637—viz., 4 district superintendents, 24 superintendents, 252 inspectors, 949 sergeants, and 8,408 constables; 2,520 men were on the superannuation list. The year's salaries of the magistrates, clerks, etc., at the metropolitan police courts amounted to 40,305, in the financial year 1871-72. These are paid from the public purse, the Consolidated Fund or Parliamentary vote.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Boston Peace Jubilee Festival has ended in a large deficit, which will fall on the guarantors of the vast outlay; the deficiency is stated to be no less than 250,000 dollars.

COUNT MOLTKE has forwarded to M. Thiers a presentation copy of “The Official History of the War of 1870-1871,” with a manuscript dedication in Count Moltke's handwriting.

AMONGST the artists lost by the sinking of the “Guadalupe,” within sight of the port of Marseilles, were Messdames Adèle Ruggiero, Rosa, and Marietta Mariotti, all well known in Italy.

DEATH OF JUAREZ.—President Juarez, who for twenty years played a most important part in the politics and government of Mexico, died of apoplexy on the night of the 18th July in the capital of that country.

WHILE some of the workmen at the Chester Cathedral were recently engaged pulling down a portion of the wall at the west end of the cathedral enclosing the staircase to the Old Bishop's Palace, they discovered a portion of the old shrine of the cathedral in an almost perfect state of preservation.

MAZZINI'S PROPERTY.—An absurd paragraph has been going the round of the press intimating that “Mazzini's great fortune is to be inherited by his nieces.” This intelligence is news to the most intimate friends of the departed patriot. Those who best knew Mazzini are aware how impossible it was for him to leave a fortune, and when it is said the fortune he left was large the absurdity of the story becomes the more apparent.

VIOLENT THUNDERSTORMS.—The severe thunderstorms of July 25 were rendered remarkable by some unusual phenomena. Many casualties from the effects of lightning are recorded, and it is stated that at Wootton Bassett some pieces of ice were picked up and found to measure upwards of six inches in circumference. At Aldershot, during the brief space of half an hour, the rainfall was 0.87 inch of rain, being almost unprecedented. The storm was also more or less severely felt at Portsmouth, Birmingham, Derby, and Chesterfield, and in South Yorkshire, Montgomeryshire, North Shropshire, Jersey, Ryde, etc.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W. W.—Both pieces are very good and interesting.

C. J. A. (Stockton-on-Tees).—Your letter received the usual attention in due course.

W. P. S.—The reply is too brusque and indefinite. Better particulars are necessary.

RICHARD H. should give a better notion of his personal appearance, in which a statement of his age must be included.

J. B. (Hull).—“Armstrong on Steam Boilers” is a little work which is well known and can be procured by order of most booksellers for a shilling.

W. W. E.—“A woman,” considered by many to be an enigma in herself, is probably the answer to the enigma which your letter contains.

J. W. L.—You will find no difficulty in obtaining the numbers if you direct your newsagent to procure for you those which contain the tale in question.

J. W. N. is another of those correspondents who while sending a very meagre account of their personal peculiarities entirely omit the particulars of their age.

J. H.—Patience is the first requisite, perseverance the second. These important questions require great consideration on both sides. A suitor who is hasty puts himself in a disadvantageous position.

D. D.—No charge is made. You have only to write a letter containing your wishes, your name and address. You should be as explicit and precise as possible. Your bookseller will in all probability obtain the work for you if you give him the order.

K. S. S. K.—As far as we understand your letter we should say the contract is quite binding. In case of dispute your opponent could be compelled to produce the stamped copy. The omission of a money consideration is of no importance provided other valuable consideration is given and mentioned in the deed.

I. W.—You can obtain information at the institution on any day, except Sunday, about noon. You must take some preliminary steps in the shape of obtaining a subscriber's letter or some sort of introduction before the patient can be treated. This is not one of those places which can be taken by storm.

NO NAME.—A sailing vessel would take four or five days to reach Lisbon from London, but allowance must always be made for the weather. Oporto is between 200 and 300 miles north of Lisbon, and is nearer to London, though the direction of a vessel's course might not make very much difference between the two places in point of time.

A. B. and F. G.—The retiring disposition of the young ladies is probably fatal to your proposed method of cultivating a tender relationship. The first beginnings of love are seldom manifested in the presence of any besides those immediately interested, the citadel of the heart being as a rule too well guarded to betray any of its weak points to strangers.

W. T.—One of the first elements of success in courtship is to love one lady only. To exhibit therefore the letter in which you reply to two ladies would be fatal to your views in either quarter. The subject should receive your reconsideration, for to every man is given the graces and powers of fascination attributed to a certain Captain Macbeth.

CYRNO.—Perhaps the verses on “The Beloved One's Grave” are fairly written, and the highly wrought enthusiasm by which they are distinguished should be pardoned in a lover. Yet, as we think, such an apostrophe to the winds, trees, and tears as is contained in the opening lines will not be found in the works of good writers. The appeal is too direct and positive; it is also ludicrously vain.

ANNIE G.—We like your handwriting very well, better than we do the orthography of four words in your letter. Perhaps however these inaccuracies are mere slips of the pen. In reply to your principal question we must say that we suspect your acquaintance has arrived at a true conclusion on the subject, albeit we are not in such a position as to be able authoritatively to endorse that conclusion.

E. H. M. and E. R.—Whether it is because the handwriting is so confused, inelegant, and unpropulsive, or because the young man's hearts were previously taken hold of without hope of redemption, or for some other reason, cannot be determined; the only certain thing that can be said is, the hopes entertained in the especial quarter referred to appear to be doomed to disappointment.

SILVER.—We have perused your letter and think you have forgotten that a writer has to describe characters

of a varied type. Were he to confine himself to the portraiture of only the estimable in life he would be manifestly untrue to the art of which he is a professor. It is perhaps necessary for you to draw a distinction between the characters of these persons amongst whom your life has been spent and those idiosyncrasies which have come across an author's path as he observingly has wended his way through the world.

THE FOUR SAILORS who write from Plymouth should consider that, however ardent may be the dispositions of some young ladies, they still are very unlikely to fall in love with anything approaching a phantom. Of course lovemaking by advertisement has its difficulties; notwithstanding something better can be attempted in this way than the very bold announcement forwarded by the “Four Sailors.” If each will write a separate letter and will try to give distinctive particulars of his “figure head” and disposition, probably the future applications will meet with a more practical success than the letter to which this notice is a reply.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—1. No. 2. The only way is carefully to cultivate your general health, which involves an abstinence from injurious habits and practices. 3. You could use a reclining board with grooves made adapted to your case, and lie upon it for as many hours every day as you can manage. 4. False teeth having been made to fit the mouth exquisitely by the help of a carefully prepared model, are retained in their places by the law of suction or gravitation or both. When seen they can be detected. 5. Occasional medicine, good food, and pure air. 6. Vigorous walking exercise. 7. The straw hats should first be carefully washed with soap and water, then fumigated with brimstone and then pressed. Take care of two things; first that you don't inhale the vapour of the brimstone and so kill yourself, second that in your efforts to accomplish an object which is usually learned by long apprenticeship you don't spoil an article of value.

I HAVE LOVED THEE.

I have loved thee, madly loved thee,
Have worshipped at thy shrine,
And watched with passionate longing
The approaching steps of time—
The time whose approaching footsteps
Have since bridged the gulf of year,
And whose distant echoing footfalls
Are still ringing in mine ears.

I have welcomed, gladly welcomed,
The memories of the past,
And felt the days not spent with thee
Each heavier than the last.

I have pictured out the future,
With its joyous, happy days,
And have seen my pathway lighted
By love's bright and sunny rays.

But I was dreaming, only dreaming
All my days a wistful dream,
Nor saw the veil of sorrow,
That hung so dark between.
But I've wakened, sadly wakened,
And those painful days recall
When I see the shadows lengthen,
And love's summer change to fall.

J. H. C.

H. J. H. H.—Notice in the ordinary sense of the word is not required, but circumstances may exist under which some proceedings are necessary which are virtually equivalent to notice. A landlord may distrain any goods of his tenant carried off the premises wherever he finds them within thirty days after, unless they have been bona fide sold for a valuable consideration; and when such removed goods have been locked up to prevent a distress the landlord may by the assistance of a police officer of the parish break open in the day time any place whither they have been removed, but the landlord in this latter case must make oath that he has reasonable ground to suspect that the goods are concealed in the house he purposed to break open.

INONOMANUS.—Upon the point in question we are as deficient in real knowledge as yourself. We have never heard of such a beverage as “Neat's Beer,” and do not find it alluded to in the books. The question savours very much of that jocular hilarity which animates the buds of promise amongst the rising generation upon an anniversary which they never forget to celebrate with high glee. Still perhaps such a concoction is not impossible in a progressive age, and if you are anxious to make an experiment you can boil a pound's weight of stinging nettles gathered by your own hand in nine gallons of water for one hour, add four lbs. of treacle and about a pint of yeast. Let the mixture work for about a week, skin during the fermentation and eventually bottle off.

WILLIE F., twenty, medium height, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, and in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be pretty and accomplished.

ANNIE, twenty-four, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, would like to marry a respectable mechanic; she is domesticated, affectionate, and fond of children.

TON BOWLING, twenty-six, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and fond of children. Respondent must be prettily, and of a lively disposition.

N. E., eighteen, medium height, domesticated, and amiable. Respondent must be a young man about twenty-three.

WILLIAM C., twenty-five, moderately tall, and very industrious, wishes to marry a young lady about twenty-three.

H. B., twenty, rather tall, fair, affectionate, and loving. Respondent must be not more than twenty-five, and an industrious mechanic.

E. A. N., twenty, 5ft. 4in., brown hair and eyes, fond of singing, and would make a good, loving wife. Respondent must be very steady, fond of home, tall, dark, able to keep a wife, and make a nice home for her.

SAM, twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., handsome, fond of home and music, a well-connected young Suffolk farmer, thinks his present position and good prospects sanction his desire to lead one of England's fair daughters to the Hymeneal

altar. Respondent should be about the same age and height, nice looking, a good pianist, with a lively, happy, yet sensible disposition; one in the neighbourhood of Ipswich preferred.

JACK WHEEL ROPE, twenty-two, middle height, fair complexion, blue eyes, brown hair, would like to make a fond, loving, pretty girl his wife; being well connected he would like respondent to be the same.

LOVING CHARLINE G. F., nineteen, tall, handsome, a good musician, slight moustache, and curly hair. Respondent must be pretty, tall, loving, a good singer, and about eighteen years of age.

SELINA M., twenty-nine, tall, fair, curly hair, good tempered and loving. Respondent must be about thirty, respectable, industrious, loving, and fond of home and children.

M. S., thirty-six, medium height, a widow possessing a comfortable home and some money, is pretty. Respondent must be loving, kind, and fond of home; a widow preferred.

K. N., twenty-three, good tempered, dark, and beautiful, black ringlets and blue eyes. Respondent must be handsome, fond of home, and have a moderately good income.

POLLIE MASON, twenty-three, 5ft. 1in., nice looking, with bright blue eyes, dark hair, very lively, and affectionate. Respondent must be a tall, steady young man good tempered, and loving; a sailor preferred.

HART, twenty-four, fair complexion, affectionate, and fond of home, wishes to marry a respectable tradesman. She is thoroughly domesticated, and would make a careful and loving wife.

L. V., nineteen, medium height, and a domestic servant, wants to marry a young man about twenty-three; he must be very tall, handsome, and able to make a wife comfortable.

SAMSON, twenty-seven, very tall, handsome, and an officer in the Army. Respondent must be about twenty, tall, graceful, industrious, and loving; the daughter of a soldier preferred.

BOLEYN, twenty-three, pretty, domesticated, amiable, and the daughter of a tradesman. Respondent must be not over twenty-eight, fair, handsome, industrious, and loving.

PAstry LULU, tall, fair, golden hair, saucy blue eyes, considered very pretty, wishes to marry a very handsome man; he must be loving, fond of home, able to sing and play the piano; a professional preferred.

T. H. D., twenty-four, of a loving disposition, fond of home, good looking, and a seaman in the Navy. Respondent should be a domestic servant between nineteen and twenty-two.

Rosina wants some one to love her; she could love a gentleman who is tall and about twenty-four. Rosina is twenty-two, has dark-brown hair, gray eyes, is above the average height, domesticated, and amiable.

CLARA PEAL, seventeen, medium height, light-brown hair and eyes, ladylike, pretty, a good pianist, and fond of company. Respondent must be tall, handsome, with black hair and dark eyes, very loving, and have a good income.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

CHARLES H. is responded to by—“Elsie Dale,” twenty, a brunette, pretty, and domesticated.

BRIGHT EYES by—“True Blue,” loving, affectionate, and in the Royal Navy.

ROSEBUD by—“Happy Tom,” 5ft. 6in., dark, auburn hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, and loving.

LOUISA W. by—“J. H.” thirty, 5ft. 8in., fond of home, and in a good business.

JOHN D. by—“May L.” She is tall, a blonde, accomplished, and has a good income.

ALFRED H. J. by—“Madge Dale,” who is all he requires.

CHARLES H. by—“L. M. E.” dark hair and eyes, has a little money, and is fond of home.

LIZZIE A. by—“J. W.” nineteen, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes, handsome, fond of home and music.

EDWIN H. by—“Frances D.” tall, dark, blue eyes, and thinks she could make a good wife to a kind and loving husband.

ELIZA W. by—“Flying Jib,” twenty-four, medium height, in the Royal Navy, and is all “Eliza” could wish for.

K. V. by—“S. J.” twenty-one, fond of music, good looking, in a good situation in a merchant's office, and could keep “K. V.” comfortably.

TAKE BLUE by—“Laughing Pollie,” twenty, good tempered; having no brothers or sisters she feels very lonely, and would make a loving little wife.

F. O. M. D. would like to hear more from “Jeanette.”

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* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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